

CULTIVATING COMPASSIONATE LIVING GROUNDED IN A CHRISTIAN
APPROACH FOR A KOREAN CONGREGATION

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In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

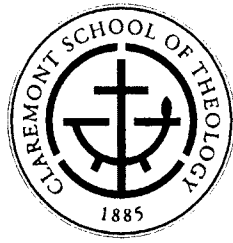
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May 2014

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Abstract

CULTIVATING COMPASSIONATE LIVING GROUNDED IN A CHRISTIAN APPROACH FOR A KOREAN CONGREGATION

Sung-Jin Yang

The core concern addressed by this dissertation is that people in Korea are suffering in their personal and communal lives. Some do not even recognize the fact that they are suffering, and some are not aware of the causes of the suffering they are experiencing. Others do not know how to free themselves from their sufferings and flourish in their lives. Most people suffer more as they choose unhelpful ways to respond to their sufferings. In particular, they suffer due to disconnection from the sacred, including God, self, and others.

Assuming compassion enables people to become free from suffering and to flourish in their lives, this dissertation explores definitions of compassion, approaches to understanding compassion, issues related to compassion, and the development of compassion through the lenses of Buddhism, select secular fields, and some Christian compassion resources. In addition, it describes meditation and other spiritual practices that these sources assert cultivate compassion. The definitions, approaches, issues, and practices of compassion within Buddhism, secular fields, and Christianity are then placed in dialogue with one another. Important principles from these sources are integrated in order to form and shape a curriculum of compassion practices for cultivating compassionate living in a Korean context.

Finally, this dissertation describes the results of carrying out the eight-week compassion practices curriculum with a group of six adults from my Korean congregation in the United States. I examine detailed descriptions of participants' experiences,

awarenesses, responses, and transformations in relation to the compassion practices course. For this examination, I use the qualitative research method of the case study to acquire an in-depth understanding of the interactions between participants and the curriculum. Supporting my premise that human beings are suffering due to disconnection from the sacred, including the divine, the Self, and others, I found that the participants in this study experienced suffering caused by disconnection from the divine, the Self, and others. Based on this premise, I asserted that compassion is a spiritual way to restore connection with the sacred. Restoring connection with the sacred enables people to become free from suffering and to experience their ultimate growth and well-being. Although the participants struggled with some aspects of compassion formation, they cultivated compassion in ways that restored their relationships with the sacred in their lives. Thus, they have started out on a journey toward compassionate living in our broken world. This research serves as a vital and valuable foundation for cultivating compassionate living and suggests directions for future studies in compassion formation.

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Table of Contents

	Page
Acknowledgments.....	iii
List of Figures and Tables.....	xi
Chapter	
1. Introduction.....	1
Discussion of the Problem	1
Discussion of the Thesis	8
Methods.....	10
Audience, Scope, and Limitations	12
Originality and Contributions	13
Outline of the Dissertation	14
2. Philosophy and Development of Compassion from Buddhist and Secular	
Perspectives.....	17
Philosophy and Development of Compassion from Buddhist Perspectives	17
Philosophy of Compassion	17
Definition of Compassion	17
Understandings of Suffering.....	20
Approaches toward Suffering	22
The Relationship between Mind and Suffering	23
The Relationship between Emotion and Suffering	24
Meditation or Mindfulness as the True Path for Compassion	25

Definitions and Philosophy of Compassion from Scientific and Social Scientific Perspectives	26
Definitions of Compassion	26
Key Characteristics of Compassion	29
Working Model of Compassion.....	30
Attachment and Caregiving Behavioral Systems	32
Physiological Systems	35
Types of Cognition Related to Compassion	40
Social Ecologies.....	42
3. Meditation or Practices for Compassion Formation from Buddhist Perspectives and Secular Areas such as Scientific and Social Scientific Perspectives	44
Compassion-Cultivation Meditation Practices from Buddhist Perspectives	44
Meditation for Compassion Based on the Perspectives of The Dalai Lama.....	44
Lojong Practices for Cultivating Compassion	52
<i>Metta</i> Practices for Cultivating Compassion	62
Meditation Practices from Scientific and Social Perspectives that Cultivate Compassion.....	73
Compassion Cultivation Training (CCT).....	73
Compassionate Mind Training (CMT)	80
Active Imagination for Cultivating Compassion	86
Internal Family Systems (IFS)	93
4. Definitions and Practices of Compassion in the Christian Perspectives.....	107

Definitions of Compassion through Linguistic Analysis of Biblical Passages....	107
The Usage of the Words Compassion and Mercy in the Old Testament.....	107
A Study of the Hebrew Words and Etymology of Compassion's Meanings ..	110
Ignatian Prayer and Contemplation	113
St. Ignatius of Loyola.....	114
Ignatian Spirituality	117
Ignatian Prayer	120
Radical Compassion by the Center for Engaged Compassion and Triptykos	
School of Compassion	125
Brief Introduction to the Triptykos School of Compassion and the Center for	
Engaged Compassion.....	125
Core Teachings of the Triptykos School of Compassion and the Center for	
Engaged Compassion.....	127
The Compassion Practice.....	133
Practicing Compassion Curriculum	136
5. Formative Processes of Compassion Practices and Practical Principles for	
Formation and Training in Compassion in a Korean Congregation.....	140
Comparison and Analysis of Understanding of Compassion in Buddhism, Secular	
Areas, and Christianity.....	140
The Meanings of Compassion	140
Sources of Suffering that Inhibit Compassion	143
Approaches to Addressing Suffering	145

Entities Needed for Compassion Formation	149
Compassion Formation through Complex Interactions of Human Capacities	150
The Process of the Compassion Practices.....	151
Practical Principles for Compassion Formation and Compassion Practices	153
The Meaning of Compassion	153
The Causes and Approaches to Suffering.....	154
Entities and Complex Interactions for Compassion Formation.....	156
Practical Compassion Practices for a Korean Congregation	157
The First Session (Restoring Sacred Encounter with God or the Divine)	158
The Second Session (Nurturing with God or the Divine).....	161
The Third Session (Discerning the Inner Movements within US)	165
The Fourth Session (Conversing with the Inner Movements within US).....	168
The Fifth Session (Extending Self-Compassion into Compassion for Others)	171
The Sixth Session (Cultivating Compassion for Loved Ones)	174
The Seventh Session (Cultivating Compassion for a Neutral Person)	177
The Eighth Session (Cultivating Compassion for a Difficult Person).....	180
6. Reflections and Implications of a Study in Compassion Formation within a	
Korean Congregation	184
Description of the Study of Compassion Formation within	
a Korean Congregation	184
Recruiting Participants for the Compassion Practices Course.....	184
Research Methodology	185

Participants.....	186
Description and Analysis of the Processes of Compassion Formation.....	188
Awareness of the Sacred Places and Times in One's Daily Life	
Getting Grounded	
Encountering the Divine or God	
Encountering Inner Movements or Parts	
Encountering Others	
Reflection and Evaluation	
7. Conclusions: A Journey toward Compassionate Living in a Broken World	212
Appendices	
A. Informed Consent to Participate in the Compassion Practices	216
B. Questions in the Courses of Compassion Practices	219
Bibliography	220

List of Figures and Tables

Figures	Page
1. The Working Model of Compassion Underwood.....	30
2. Multi-Modal Compassionate Mind Training.....	82
Tables	Page
1. The Usage of the Words Compassion and Mercy in the Old Testament.....	109
2. Parent Noun of רַחֵם.....	111
3. Parent Noun of חַנּוּן.....	112

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Chapter 1

Introduction

People in Korean society encounter suffering in their personal and communal lives. The suffering includes not only personal and internal wounds and pains, but also pain caused by relationships with others and by social structures existent within a violent and broken world. Although they have experienced multiple forms of suffering in many aspects of their lives, they have not recognized the best ways to deal with their sufferings; they have not been aware of their suffering or its causes. In addition, they have not realized how they could be free their suffering and flourish in their lives. Instead, they have accepted suffering as a part of their lives and not allowed themselves to be aware of their suffering. Thus, their suffering has produced more suffering in their personal and internal lives and in their communal lives.

My thesis is that compassion is a pathway to becoming free from suffering and experiencing a fullness of life. Therefore, in this dissertation I will explore a practical and spiritual curriculum for nurturing compassion that is specifically designed to cultivate the necessary capacities, emotions, attitudes, and practices for healing people who are experiencing suffering in their personal and communal lives.

Discussion of the Problem

There are three core issues that gave rise to the focus of this dissertation. The first is that many Koreans are suffering in their social and cultural contexts. The second is that they are confronted with disconnection from the sacred, including the divine, the Self, and others, which causes suffering. The third is that these persons have not adopted any valuable resources for cultivating compassion in order to free themselves from suffering

and nurture vitality and growth in their lives.

In relation to the first issue, according to an analysis of the social and cultural contexts of Korea, many Koreans have expressed that they are unhappy in their personal and communal lives. An article in *Arirang News* with the title, *Koreans Still Unhappy Despite Rising GDP*, analyzes The Better Life Index of 2013.¹ The Better Life Index measures people's levels of happiness by taking into consideration 11 areas: housing, income, jobs, community, education, environment, civic engagement, health, life satisfaction, safety, and work-life balance. According to the report, Korea ranked 24th among 36 OECD countries in terms of happiness in spite of the country's growth in Gross Domestic Product (GDP). For example, in the area of *life satisfaction*, Korea scored 4.2 on a scale from 0 to 10, significantly lower than the 6.6 average score of the other OECD countries.² Life satisfaction measures happiness or subjective well-being, thus signifying that Koreans are not entirely satisfied with their lives, although they have achieved material success and their country has become economically developed.

In addition, the Gallup International Association performed a 2011 survey about the life happiness of 1,524 Koreans. The report was titled, "The Happiness of Koreans: A Comparison Survey of Happiness Out of 57 Countries." According to the survey, 52% of Koreans felt happy in their lives, 8% were unhappy, and 38% of Koreans were neither happy nor unhappy. In terms of Koreans' actual level of happiness, the report indicated that half of Koreans felt unhappy about their lives. Gallup polled 52,287 people in 57 countries on the topic of happiness. The poll compared the level of Koreans' happiness

¹ Li-an Yoo, "Koreans Still Unhappy Despite Rising GDP," *Arirang News*, March 20, 2013, accessed Jun. 14, 2013, http://www.arirang.co.kr/News/News_View.asp?nseq=145072, 1.

² Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development(OECD), "Korea," *OECD Better Life Index* 2013, accessed Jun. 14, 2013, <http://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/topics/life-satisfaction>, 1.

with the level of happiness of people in other countries. Among the 57 countries, 53% of people reported that they were happy, 13% reported feeling unhappy, and 31% reported that they are neither happy nor unhappy. At 52%, Koreans' average rate of happiness (53%) was similar to that of other countries. However, Korea's level of happiness ranked 34th out of the 57 countries included in the poll.³

These two surveys imply two things: the sense of happiness among Koreans is relatively lower than the level of happiness of people in other countries, and Koreans recognize that they do not feel happy in their lives. It can also be inferred that being low in terms of happiness means being high in levels of suffering. There is no direct and actual index to measure the level of Koreans' suffering. However, an estimate of the sense of suffering in Korean lives can be made in two indirect ways. First, we can surmise the level of suffering by comparing it with the index of happiness examined above. Second, we can use social indicators--such as divorce and suicide rates—to estimate the level of Koreans' suffering. The divorce and suicide rates are closely related to a sense of suffering. According to OECD indicators, “The intentional killing of oneself can be evidence not only of personal breakdown, but also of a deterioration of the social context in which an individual lives.”⁴ Also, the divorce rate implies individual and social stress within marriage relationships. In this respect, the high rate of suicide and divorce seems to be an accurate reflection of the high level of suffering in personal and communal lives.

³ Gallup Korea, “The Happiness of Koreans: Comparison Survey of Happiness Out of 57 Countries,” *Gallup Korea* (2011), accessed Jun. 14, 2013, <http://www.gallup.co.kr/gallupdb/reportContent.asp?seqNo=252&pagePos=1&selectYear=0&search=2&searchKeyword=%C7%E0%BA%B9>.

⁴ OECD, “Suicide,” in *Health at a Glance 2011: OECD Indicators*, OECD Publishing (2011), accessed Jun. 22, 2013, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/health_glance-2011-9-en, 34.

According to 2011 OECD indicators about suicide, Korea's suicide rate was the highest among other OECD countries in 2009. Korea ranked first out of 34 OECD countries, with the data reporting 28.4 suicides per 100,000 individuals in Korea.⁵ As reflected by these numbers, Korea's suicide rate is very serious. Statistics Korea offers information about Korea's divorce rate: in 2011, the number of divorced heads of family stood at 114,300, and crude divorce rates were 2.3 per 1,000 people. In fact, between 1980 and 2004, Korea's divorce rate multiplied by a factor of five—from 0.6 to 2.9.⁶ Based on these reports of suicide and divorce rates, it can be assumed that Koreans are experiencing more suffering and less happiness in their lives compared to people twenty years ago. Thus, Koreans need a way to reduce their suffering and gain greater flourishing.

The second issue contributing to the concerns of this dissertation is the spiritual tendencies or directions of Korean people. They are experiencing the “pain of disconnection” from the sacred, including the divine, the Self, and all sentient beings.⁷ According to Parker Palmer, an educator and spiritual leader, disconnection from the sacred emerges from “a one-eyed view.” This one-eyed view emerges from thinking that is based on fact, reason, and intellect, and it characterizes many people today. A one-eyed view produces a mechanical, scientific, secularized, and commercial or material viewpoint. Sacred realities, moments, and values are negated by those who are engrossed

⁵ OECD, “Suicide,” 34.

⁶ Statistics Korea, “Statistics of Marriage and Divorce in 2011,” accessed Jun. 22, 2013, http://kostat.go.kr/portal/korea/kor_nw/2/2/1/index.board?bmode=read&bSeq=&aSeq=255001&pageNo=5&rowNum=10&navCount=10&currPg=&sTarget=title&sTxt=.

⁷ Parker J. Palmer, *To Know As We Are Known: Education as a Spiritual Journey* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993), x. I quote Parker's phrase, “pain of disconnection,” which he uses in relation to education and spirituality. He points out that teachers and students in contemporary school systems are disconnected from their friends, students, or teachers and their own knowing and emotions. Drawing on this perspective, I assert that people in the contemporary world are also disconnected from God, self, others, and all sentient beings.

in a one-eyed view. In this respect, they have lost the “wholesight” to see both phenomenological reality based on fact, science, and reason and spiritual and heart-centered reality based on values.⁸ Thus, the one-eyed view separates them from God or the divine, causing them to disregard encounters with the divine and spiritual values.

In relation to disconnection from the Self, the one-eyed view drives us to become separated from the true Self, the sacred within us, that is “open, mature, wise, curious, loving, compassionate, and connected.”⁹ The reason is that the one-eyed view measures the value of a person from a mechanical, secularized, and commercial or material viewpoint, disregarding the humanity and dignity of the Self. It causes distorted views, judgments, biases, and partialities so that we criticize and judge ourselves without any compassion. Thus, we lose the balanced guidance of the Self and an extreme inner part or parts or hidden inner movements take over our inner worlds. Inner movements include “reactive emotions such as anger, fear, despair, and disgust; internal voices such as self-loathing, perfectionism, blame, or judgment; and behavioral impulses in unawareness.”¹⁰ The more the extreme parts are activated, the more we disconnect from the true Self that is our spiritual core. In other words, the suffering of disconnection happens as a result of inner movements by which we are separated from our true Self, the sacred within.

⁸ Palmer, xxiii. Palmer explains that “wholesight” has two types of sight. One type emerges from the mind based on fact and reason. The other sight is grounded in the heart with love. In my use of the word, “wholesight,” my perspective is that one sight comes from the mind, as Palmer states, while the other is a spiritual sight.

⁹ Jay Earley, *Self-Therapy: A Step-By-Step Guide to Creating Wholeness and Healing Your Inner Child Using IFS, A New, Cutting Edge Psychotherapy* (Minneapolis, MN: Mill City Press, 2009), 7. According to Earley, there are many parts in our inner worlds. They interact with each other under the guidance of a true Self. Also, each part has its own role, belief, feeling, motivation, and memory in its harmonious and compassionate relationship with the many parts. However, when we lose the leadership of the true Self, the extreme parts, like guards seeking to protect us, can take over. See Jay Earley, 16-29.

¹⁰ Frank Rogers Jr., Mark Yaconelli, and Andrew Dreitcer, *Practicing Compassion: Following the Spiritual Path of Jesus* [Claremont School of Theology], forthcoming, 20.

Finally, concerning disconnection from all sentient beings, a one-eyed view results in a dualistic perspective in which all entities are separate and independent. The dualistic view disrupts any idea that we are interconnected with each other as interdependent beings. Thus, it causes disconnection between self and others, self and nature, and self and the world, disrupting all our relationships, although in reality we are not separate beings but interdependent.¹¹

These disconnections from God or the divine, the Self, and all sentient beings cause us to be fragmented beings who suffer in a broken world. This suffering challenges me to explore encounters with the sacred, including God or the divine, the Self, and all sentient beings, for gaining peace, restoration, justice, healing, reconciliation, and hope in our world. Also, I am concerned about how people can cultivate spiritual practices for sacred encounters that lead to compassionate living.

The third issue that invokes my concern is that, although there are some great resources for alleviating suffering and nurturing vitality, Koreans have not been interested in nor have they used such resources in order to nurture compassion. As I discovered through my investigation, several areas provide resources. First, there are meditations in Buddhism designed to cultivate compassion. One of them is a meditation for compassion based on the perspectives of The Dalai Lama. A second one is the Lojong practice that is used to cultivate compassion in Tibetan Buddhism, and a third one is the Metta practice introduced by Buddhagosa, a famous fifth-century commentator on the Theravada tradition of Buddhism. Although there are many Buddhist resources for the formation of compassion, Koreans have not used such meditations to teach themselves

¹¹ Dalai Lama, *The Power of Compassion: A Collection of Lectures by His Holiness the XIV Dalai Lama* (London: Thorsons, 1995), 103.

compassionate living.

Secondly, secular fields, such as scientific and social scientific disciplines, have been exploring practical meditations for cultivating compassion. These include Compassion Cultivation Training (CCT) from the Center for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education (CCARE), and Compassionate Mind Training (CMT), which has been developed by clinical psychologist Paul Gilbert. In addition, Active Imagination, which was first formulated by Carl Gustav Jung, and Internal Family Systems (IFS) are valuable resources for the formation of compassion. Even though secular meditation practices have been explored for the cultivation of compassion, they have not been introduced into and utilized within the Korean context.

Finally, although some practices in Christian traditions cannot be directly referred to as compassion practices, they have essential components and orientations that can cultivate compassion. One such representative practice is Ignatian prayer, which includes imaginative contemplation and Examen. However, such practices have not been developed or adopted in Korean contexts. The Center for Engaged Compassion (CEC) at Claremont Lincoln University has recently developed engaged compassion practices to cultivate skills and capacities for compassionate living. The Center was established by Dr. Frank Rogers, Dr. Andrew Dreitcer, and Mark Yaconelli and is grounded in the Christian tradition. Its practical spiritual formation program “offers a mixture of retreat, one-on-one spiritual direction, online instruction, weekly spiritual practices, group processes, readings, and radical Christian teachings for personal and social transformation.”¹² Although the program is an outstanding and valuable resource, it, too, has not been

¹² Triptykos, “The Way of Radical Compassion: Practicing the Spiritual Path of Jesus,” accessed Sep. 16, 2013, <http://www.triptykos.com/events-and-courses>.

introduced in Korea.

These three issues bring me to address the meanings, issues, and practices or meditation approaches that cultivate compassion for connection with the sacred.

Discussion of the Thesis

My thesis is that compassion is a way to free people from suffering, connect them with the sacred, and bring about their flourishing as they live compassionately.

Compassion also helps people become aware of their suffering and the causes of that suffering so they may find freedom from pain and happiness in their lives. It cultivates the skills, heart, will, motivation, attitudes, and behaviors needed to relieve suffering.

Specifically, compassion is a spiritual way to restore connection with the sacred,

including the divine, the Self, and others, across the many boundaries that separate us.

Restoring connection with the sacred enables people to become free from suffering and to experience restoration, healing, reconciliation, and hope in our world.

In terms of the divine or God, compassion enables us to experience the presence of the divine as a compassionate source. God is a sacred and compassionate being. When we are connected with God or the divine, compassion flows within and over us. On the other hand, when we are disconnected from the divine presence, the compassionate core within us gradually disappears or dissipates. Entering the road of compassion is to restore connection with the divine. Thus, compassion helps us to engage in divine union, love, fellowship, and awareness of our compassionate God as the sacred Source.

In relation to the Self, compassion restores connection with the Self as the sacred within so that freedom from suffering and healing might be found. Compassion helps us see what is happening to us in our inner worlds. In particular, it facilitates the process of

becoming aware of the inner part or parts that cause inner movements, including thoughts, emotions, desires, impulses, and inner voices, that bring about suffering in our lives. Thus, compassion nurtures the Self, as a compassionate essence, into conversing with and caring for the inner part or parts hidden in inner movements and assists it in understanding the parts' sufferings, needs, wants, and fears. In other words, compassion invites us to restore connection with the Self so we may live more compassionately.

In terms of relationships with others, compassion restores connection with others, including loved ones, neutral persons, and difficult persons. Compassion for others emerges from connection with the Self and the divine. In particular, it helps us to recognize the fears, needs, wants, and sufferings of others. Thus, compassion invites us to be aware of the humanity of others as sacred beings and to stand in others' shoes in order to understand their positions, attitudes, and sufferings. In other words, compassion becomes the bridge that is able to restore connection with others, making it possible for us to recognize that we are interdependent beings.

To assess my thesis, this dissertation explores definitions of compassion, approaches to understanding compassion, issues related to compassion, and the development of compassion through the lenses of Buddhism, select secular fields, and some Christian resources. In addition, it describes meditational and other spiritual practices that these sources assert cultivate compassion. The definitions, approaches, issues, and practices of compassion within Buddhism, secular fields, and Christianity are placed in dialogue with one another. Then important principles from these sources are integrated in order to form and shape a curriculum of compassion practices for cultivating compassionate living in a Korean context.

Methods

My dissertation will employ an interdisciplinary method, placing Christian resources in dialogue with other disciplines.¹³ Coming from a Christian perspective, Triptykos and the CEC have recently explored the definitions, issues, and understandings of compassion and practices to nurture compassion in people's daily lives. In addition, there are some essential components and approaches for cultivating compassion in a few Christian traditions, although compassion is not directly referred to as an aim. In Buddhism and several secular fields, many studies have been undertaken to explore the meanings, understandings, and issues of compassion and to nurture compassion. Therefore, my research will explore various definitions of compassion, approaches to understanding compassion, issues related to compassion, and practices to cultivate compassion within three areas: Christianity, Buddhism, and select secular fields. Through a dialectical interaction of these three areas, theoretical grounds and principles for nurturing compassion will be developed. These will then form and shape a curriculum of compassion practices for compassionate living. In addition, this dissertation will analyze the results of carrying out the compassion practices curriculum in a Korean context.

My bibliographical research will involve a study of literature concerning definitions, understandings, issues, and practices of compassion within Buddhism and secular areas such as physiology, psychology, family studies, and neuroscience. It will

¹³ Gijsbert D. J. Dingemans, "Practical Theology in the Academy: A Contemporary Overview," *Journal of Religion* 76, no. 1 (January 1, 1996): 91. Gijsbert D. J. Dingemans explains J. A. Van Der Ven's approaches to the relationship between theology and other disciplines. First, there was a period of practical theology as applied theology where the method was monodisciplinarity. Second, some practical theologians have gradually accepted other disciplines, such as those from the social sciences, and developed a model of multidisciplinarity. Third, the model of interdisciplinarity was created to promote real dialogue between theology and the social sciences. It provides a mutually interactive form of cooperation. The interdisciplinary approach needs to be encouraged to be used more in relation to developing, understanding, and assessing compassion practices.

also entail a study of compassion and compassion practices within Christianity, particularly how Ignatian prayer and contemplation can contribute to compassion formation and the work of Triptykos and the Center for Engaged Compassion (CEC).

My qualitative research method is the case study approach. According to educational psychologist John Creswell, case study focuses on “in-depth description and analysis.”¹⁴ The purpose of a case study is for a researcher to acquire a deep and thorough understanding of a case or issue.¹⁵ I created and implemented an eight-week course of compassion practices with volunteer participants from a Korean congregation. Utilizing Creswell’s case study method, I describe and analyze participants’ experiences, awarenesses, responses, and transformations that resulted from the compassion practices course. My specific concerns for the case study were as follows: (1) How were the participants grounded in an encounter with the sacred in their lives? (2) How did they interact interiorly with their interior parts and authentic Self? (3) How did they interact with their loved ones, neutral persons, and even difficult persons?

The participants in the compassion practices course were self-selected from my Korean congregation. During the course I encouraged them to share in detail their experiences with the compassion practices. The data I collected were the participants’ spiritual journals, pictures, symbolic art, and recorded conversations. All the data was recorded in a digital format and is stored on my personal laptop and in a back-up drive with password protection. No one else will have access to the information. The data will be retained for five years after the completion of this dissertation.

¹⁴ John W. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches*, 3rd ed. (Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, 2013), 104.

¹⁵ Creswell, 98.

Audience, Scope, and Limitations

My dissertation will be useful to those who suffer in their personal and communal lives. It will offer them ways to deal with their suffering and to find happiness and joy in their lives. In addition, it provides methods for restoring connection with the sacred for those who feel disconnected. In particular, it will be a valuable resource for spiritual directors who instruct church congregations and want to help people encounter the sacred, including the divine or God, the Self, and others. It will also be attractive to those who are interested in inner healing and restoration through the guidance of the Self in the unconscious or authentic encounters with inner parts in their inner worlds. Finally, it will be of interest to persons who seek to participate in and nurture their own compassionate hearts in response to the suffering of others or the cries of the world.

Although my research is interdisciplinary, drawing upon Buddhist, Christian, and secular resources, the focus of my dissertation is spiritual practices for helping Christians restore connection with the sacred and nurture compassion in their lives. Thus, I approached my research from a Christian perspective, seeking to integrate principles from various sources into a Christian framework of compassion practices. My aim was to produce a curriculum of Christian compassion practices for a Christian congregation.

In addition, my dissertation is written from my Korean Christian perspective and for Korean Christian contexts. Thus, my study of important compassion formation principles, the formation of a curriculum for compassion practices, and my reflections on the responses of the research participants was done from a Korean perspective, whether unintentionally or intentionally. My research was further limited in that it was done with only six participants in their fifties and early sixties from a Korean congregation located

in the United States. Therefore, it may not be applicable to Korean Christians living in Korea or to persons of other ages, and the experiences and responses of the participants in the course I taught may not be able to be generalized to others, due to these persons' unique situations, contexts, and personalities.

For future research, I would like to carry out my eight-week course of compassion in diverse contexts and with people in different age groups and then study and analyze these participants' responses. The results of such research would be a universally valuable resource for developing compassion practices and nurturing different paths of compassion.

Originality and Contributions

Until now, although various useful and valuable practices have been available for nurturing compassion for freedom from suffering and for human flourishing, Korean people have not adopted them for use within the Korean Christian context. In this respect, there has been no research to understand how people in Korea might respond to compassion practices and how a curriculum for compassion formation might affect their daily lives. Thus, this dissertation will contribute a new and needed approach to the cultivation of compassion with Korean Christians as a way to restore connection with the sacred. Furthermore, it will be a valuable resource for acquiring an in-depth understanding of people's interactions and experiences related to compassion practices.

The demographic of my research is Korean Christians. Although this limits the extent of my research, it will be useful because it will provide a glimpse into the culture and inclinations of a Korean-American congregation. Moreover, it may challenge other researchers to study additional Korean congregations, other ethnic groups, or even other

religious groups.

Outline of the Dissertation

Chapter 1 has explained why compassion formation is important and necessary in the Korean context. The first reason is that Koreans are suffering in their personal and communal lives. Some surveys indicate that many Koreans are experiencing more suffering than happiness in their lives. Secondly, I assert that Koreans' experiences of pain result from a feeling of disconnection from the sacred, including God or the divine, the Self, and others. The third issue is that Koreans have not been interested in nor have they used various valuable resources for cultivating compassion in order to free themselves from suffering and to flourish. I have also described my research methodology, the audience, scope, and limitations of my research, and its originality and contributions.

Chapter 2 will explore various definitions of compassion as it is understood and applied within Buddhism as well as scientific and social scientific frameworks. In the first section, I will explore a Buddhist understanding of compassion, including a discussion of the definition of compassion, understandings of and approaches toward suffering, the relationship between mind and suffering and emotion and suffering, and paths for true compassion. In the second section, compassion will be defined from scientific and social scientific perspectives such as physiology, psychology, family studies, and neuroscience. Approaches to understanding compassion and its development will be discussed from the viewpoint of each of these disciplines.

Chapter 3 will cover meditation and other practices that cultivate compassion within Buddhism and some secular perspectives. In the first part, three styles of Buddhist

compassion practices will be explored: meditation for compassion based on the perspectives of the Dalai Lama, the Lojong practice that is used to cultivate compassion in Tibetan Buddhism, and Metta practices, which are based on a desire that all beings be free from suffering and enjoy happiness. The second part will explore five kinds of practices for nurturing compassion: Compassion Cultivation Training (CCT) from the Center for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education (CCARE), Compassionate Mind Training (CMT) by Paul Gilbert, Active Imagination, which was first formulated by Carl Gustav Jung, and Internal Family Systems (IFS) practices.

Chapter 4 will examine the definition, understanding, issues, and practices of compassion from a Christian perspective. It will include defining compassion through a linguistic analysis of biblical passages. In addition, I will describe spiritual practices and exercises for compassion within the Christian tradition, such as Ignatian prayer and contemplation and a curriculum for compassion formation from the Triptykos School of Compassion and the Center for Engaged Compassion (CEC).

Chapter 5 will compare and analyze meanings, issues, and practices of compassion through interactive conversations between Buddhist, secular, and Christian resources. Then I will address the differences and similarities in regards to compassion in these sources. This work will help me to form and shape principles and methods of compassion practices for my congregation. Moreover, I will integrate important principles for cultivating compassionate living in my context. Finally, I will create and implement an eight-week course of compassion practices to nurture compassionate living in my congregation. The curriculum for compassion practices will be a spiritual way to restore connection with the sacred, since I premise that all causes of suffering emerge

from disconnection from the sacred. The sacred consists of God, the true Self, and others. In this course, the compassion practices of the first and second weeks are methods for connecting with God as a compassionate source. The compassion practices during weeks three and four concentrate on a spiritual way to restore connection with the Self in the seat of consciousness. The compassion practices of weeks five through eight focus on nurturing compassion for others, including loved ones, neutral persons, and difficult persons who have hurt us.

Chapter 6 will describe and examine the responses and experiences of participants who participated in the compassion practices curriculum. For this description and examination, I use the qualitative research method of the case study to gain a deep understanding of the experiences, struggles, and transformations of the participants. The case study method will facilitate reflection on the processes, responses to, and transformative results of compassion formation in terms of the interaction between church members and the curriculum. In particular, this chapter will focus on detailed descriptions of participants' experiences, awarenesses, responses, and transformations in relation to restoring connection with the sacred, including the divine, the Self, and others, during the compassion practices course.

The conclusion will summarize this dissertation, including the issues that gave rise to it, my thesis, my research, and my reflections on what I found through my research. Finally, it will make some suggestions for future research related to nurturing compassion.

Chapter 2

Philosophy and Development of Compassion from Buddhist and Secular Perspectives

Chapter 2 will explore definitions of compassion, approaches of understanding compassion, and its issues and development from a variety of perspectives, including Buddhism and scientific and social scientific perspectives such as physiology, psychology, and family studies, and neuroscience. The first part is dedicated to definitions and philosophy of compassion from a Mahayana Buddhist Perspective. The second is designed to definitions and philosophy of compassion from scientific and social scientific perspectives.

Philosophy and Development of Compassion from Buddhist Perspectives

It is no exaggeration to say that the concepts and practices of compassion formation in the twenty-first century have been developed by and emerge from Buddhist perspectives. In the first part of this chapter, I will explore the Buddhist definition of compassion and how it is understood within the Buddhist framework. Such Buddhist understandings are mainly grounded within the perspectives of the Dalai Lama. This part includes a discussion of the definition of compassion, understandings of and approaches toward suffering, the relationship between mind and suffering and emotion and suffering, and meditation or mindfulness as a true path for compassion.

Philosophy of Compassion

Definition of Compassion

Compassion is defined as the desire that “all beings be free of their suffering.”¹ The fundamental ground in defining it is that all human beings desire happiness and do not want suffering. It is believed that all sentient beings, including human beings, naturally try to avoid harm or suffering to secure protection, safety, or even happiness.

¹ Dalai Lama, *An Open Heart: Practicing Compassion in Everyday Life* (Boston: Little, Brown, 2001), ix.

In their desire to overcome suffering and to achieve happiness, the rationale for compassion is that all people have the same right to be happy and free from suffering. This right is not limited to some but open and available to all human beings.² Nobody wants suffering and unhappiness. In this respect, all human beings are equal to attain happiness. Thus, compassion emerges from the awareness that all human beings, including oneself and others, want happiness and freedom from suffering.

Buddhist teachings themselves are deeply rooted with compassion. In Buddhist teachings, a Bodhisattva as an enlightened being is filled with compassion.³ A Bodhisattva generates a bodhicitta⁴ as awakening mind or heart that is derived from compassion for the happiness and wellbeing of all sentient beings. Bodhicitta as the awakening mind or heart is not attained without compassion because compassion becomes its root or foundation. Thus, compassion is defined as “a mind that focuses on the sentient beings that are miserable and wishes them to be free from suffering.”⁵

In the Buddhist teachings, compassion can be cultivated through the realization of emptiness and dependent origination. Generally speaking, “emptiness” may be thought of as “nothing” or “non-existence.” According to Pema Chödrön, “Emptiness isn’t really empty in the way we might think of it.”⁶

Rather, the meaning of emptiness can be understood as the “interdependent nature” in the relationships to others’ existences.⁷ In other words, the self is not an independent but an

² Dalai Lama, *Power of Compassion*, 2.

³ Dalai Lama, *The Heart of Compassion: A Practical Approach to a Meaningful Life* (Twin Lakes, WI: Lotus Press, 2002), 66–67.

⁴ Pema Chödrön, *Start Where You Are: A Guide to Compassionate Living* (Boston: Shambhala, 2001), 11. Pema Chödrön emphasizes the three characteristic of bodhicitta: the first is soft and gentle, the second is clear and sharp, and the third is open. According to her, compassion is related with the first quality as soft and gentle.

⁵ Dalai Lama, *Stages of Meditation* (Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion Publications, 2001), 48.

⁶ Pema Chödrön, *Start Where You Are*, 65.

⁷ Dalai Lama, *Power of Compassion*, 103.

interdependent existence. The conception of self is explained in relation with others. Self and other are not distinct but are inseparable existences. Thus, self and other can be interpreted as related beings.

In this respect, self-emptiness does not mean that the self is a non-existing entity. The true meaning of self-emptiness is to recognize the self as an interdependent existence. So the Dalai Lama defines emptiness as “the absence of independent existence.”⁸ In other words, self-emptiness is to renounce self-consciousness as an independent existence. Thus, compassion emerges from the realization of emptiness, eliminating our independent natures and recognizing that all beings are interdependent existences. Awareness of emptiness leads to realization that another’s suffering can be one’s own suffering because all beings are interconnected.

In addition, the true meaning of emptiness is closely associated with dependent origination. Dependent origination means all objects are connected with each other and all phenomena come from causes and conditions. When we understand a phenomenon, the right view is to explore the phenomenon’s causes and conditions, not to see only the result as the phenomenon. Thus, a phenomenon has dependent origination in terms of its relation with its cause and its context. Moreover, all objects or things are also defined in their relation with others. The important thing to understand in the concept of dependent origination is that when an object is related with another, it completely gives up its own independent power, recognizing its interdependent nature.⁹ Thus, an object or thing coexists in the presence of others’ existences. Dependent origination enables us to realize that we as interdependent natures coexist in one another’s existences and others are also part of us. The suffering of another is also understood as part of one’s interdependent nature, and compassion is cultivated to participate in the suffering of

⁸ Dalai Lama, *Worlds in Harmony: Dialogues on Compassionate Action* (Berkeley, CA: Parallax Press, 1992), 23.

⁹ Dalai Lama, *Heart of Compassion*, 43.

others, taking responsibility for others' and one's own happiness.¹⁰ Thus, compassion is defined as the wish that all sentient beings being free from suffering.

Since compassion is defined as a desire to be free from suffering, compassion is clearly related to suffering. Accordingly, it is critical to understand notions of suffering, approaches toward suffering, and causes of suffering in order to understand compassion. The next four sections will cover these topics.

Understandings of Suffering

One of the most fundamental teachings in Buddhism is the Four Noble Truths related to suffering.¹¹ The First Noble Truth points out that human life is full of suffering, explaining that human beings experience the suffering of birth, old age, sickness, death, and so on. There are three types of suffering within human life: the suffering of pain, the suffering of change, and all-pervasive suffering. The suffering of pain is physical or mental suffering, like illness or the death of loved ones. All sentient beings want to avoid this kind of suffering, while blocking the sources of suffering. The second type of suffering is referred to as "the suffering of change." It means that, although we have material wealth and worldly fame, enjoyment and pleasure from them is temporary and impermanent. Thus, impermanence enables us to experience change that brings about suffering. The third type of suffering is described as "all-pervasive suffering." It is difficult to recognize this kind of suffering because it does not manifest like the suffering of pain and it does not have opposite manifestations like pleasure, wealth, and fame. The suffering that emerges from negative emotions and thoughts is pervasive in our daily lives. In other words, we live with suffering through the nature of our cyclical existence; our existence itself is in

¹⁰ Dalai Lama, *Heart of Compassion*, 68.

¹¹ Dalai Lama, *Power of Compassion*, 6.

suffering.¹² This means that all human beings' lives are none other than forms of suffering; nobody can avoid suffering.

The Second Noble Truth highlights the need to recognize sources of suffering. If we have any diseases, we first need to identify their symptoms and causes before curing them. When we recognize clear causes and conditions that produce suffering, we also discover ways to overcome suffering. The Second Noble Truth, as awareness about sources of suffering, leads to cessation of suffering.¹³

The Third Noble Truth insists on the cessation of suffering. Although human beings live in the constant presence of suffering, cessation of suffering can be attained through identifying the causes of suffering. Cessation of suffering is a state of mind free from all negative emotions and thoughts.¹⁴

The Fourth Noble Truth refers to true paths to free ourselves from suffering: right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration.¹⁵

Through the Four Noble Truths as Buddha's teaching, the first realization is that all human beings have the same desire to free themselves from suffering. This leads us to feel a common bond with others and to have compassionate tendencies toward all human beings, recognizing that others also suffer as we do. Recognizing our personal experience of suffering helps us understand the suffering of others and gives us the desire that others be free from their suffering.

The second realization is that recognition of suffering and its causes allows us to go into

¹² Dalai Lama, *Open Heart*, 94–95.

¹³ Dalai Lama, *Heart of Compassion*, 27.

¹⁴ Dalai Lama, *Power of Compassion*, 40.

¹⁵ Dalai Lama, *Heart of Compassion*, 26–29.

the path of compassion as the first step. Moreover, through the cessation of suffering and the true path for ending suffering, we discover that all human beings have the same potentials to completely participate in paths of compassion.

Approaches toward Suffering

When people experience suffering, they generally take one of two approaches to it. The first one is to avoid or deny the suffering around them. The other is to look into and recognize the suffering.¹⁶ Buddhism encourages us to concentrate on suffering, rather than avoiding or denying it.

Recognizing the suffering means labeling negative emotions and thoughts that cause suffering such as attachment, anger, hatred, greed, jealousy, and pride, whatever they are, without engaging in them. Thus, it is not to reject or repress negative emotions and thoughts as causes of suffering, but to let them to go and come within us.¹⁷ Actually, avoiding or denying suffering provides just momentary relief. Suffering still exists within us. For instance, going to a picnic or watching a movie to avoid suffering provides us a short and temporary respite. But the essential problems of suffering are not authentically solved and suffering will arise again. On the contrary, when we recognize suffering, analyzing the causes and natures of suffering, we can overcome it.¹⁸

In this respect, Buddhism suggests a right attitude or way as the path to overcome suffering in one's present life. As the Second Noble Truth suggests, the appropriate response to suffering is to recognize and analyze the causes and situations of suffering. This notion is based on "a universal principle of causality" in the basic philosophy of Buddhism.¹⁹ It means that an

¹⁶ Dalai Lama, *Worlds in Harmony*, 36.

¹⁷ Pema Chödrön, *Start Where You Are*, 35.

¹⁸ Dalai Lama, *Worlds in Harmony*, 14–15.

¹⁹ Dalai Lama, *Power of Compassion*, 6.

effect is dependent on causes and conditions. In other words, causes bring about effects and effects are produced by causes. Thus, according to the principle of causality, one's present state of mind (the effect or result), whether it is positive or negative, is cultivated by causes and conditions.

Recognizing causes and conditions of suffering enables us to have the desire to change the present state of suffering and to free ourselves from suffering. Focusing on the causes and conditions of another's suffering invites us to have the desire to free that other from his or her suffering. This is none other than compassion.²⁰ In addition, precise awareness of suffering's conditions and causes helps us to see authentic reality, because it eliminates the delusion of reality influenced by our projections, such as attachment, greed, hatred, and pride. Thus, it helps us free ourselves from the suffering caused by delusion and for authentic happiness.²¹ In conclusion, the Dalai Lama emphasizes that compassion emerges from recognizing causes and situation of suffering. The more recognition of suffering becomes expanded, the more compassion also can be cultivated.²²

The Relationship between Mind and Suffering

Overcoming suffering is similar to eliminating the causes of suffering. Buddhism understands that the basic cause of suffering is closely related to the mind. Moreover, true happiness as a state of freedom from suffering depends on the mind. In this respect, the Dalai Lama points out that "the ultimate source of happiness is in our mental attitude."²³ For instance, if a person has a positive attitude, no matter where he or she is, even if it is an unfortunate situation, he or she can possess an inner peace and happiness. On the contrary, supposing that the

²⁰ Dalai Lama, *Open Heart*, 38.

²¹ Dalai Lama, *Open Heart*, 33–34.

²² Dalai Lama, *Open Heart*, 93.

²³ Dalai Lama, *Power of Compassion*, 49.

mind is negatively oriented, although a person is in a hospitable situation, he or she can never be happy. In other words, a negative mindset destroys a state of happiness and brings about suffering within us. Thus, happiness or suffering is determined by the mind rather than any external conditions.²⁴

Some people may have the illusion that external factors, like material possessions or fame, completely affect our happiness. It is true that they sometimes may give us pleasure and enjoyment. However, although we don't have such external factors present in our lives, we can maintain a state of happiness and have inner peace. Thus, external factors are not essential for true happiness and lack of suffering.²⁵ Conversely, although we have an actual physical illness as an external factor, we don't experience mental suffering if we accept the idea that the illness is caused by our own faults and that we live in a state of suffering as part of our cyclic existence. Moreover, positive emotions and thoughts enable us to overcome physical illness.²⁶ Thus, true happiness and freedom from suffering depend on the mind.

The Relationship between Emotion and Suffering

In Buddhism, emotion is closely interrelated with mind and body. Thus, negative emotions originate from a negative mind and affect the physical body. Emotions have two kinds of natures: positive and negative.²⁷ Happiness or unhappiness is influenced by whether our emotion is positive or negative. When negative emotion arises within us, we come to experience suffering. This is why negative emotion disrupts the inner and peaceful mind, creating mental unease. Thus, negative emotions that arise within us are our real enemy.²⁸ All suffering we experience emerges from negative emotions such as attachment, anger, hatred, greed, jealousy,

²⁴ Dalai Lama, *Open Heart*, 6.

²⁵ Dalai Lama, *Heart of Compassion*, 31.

²⁶ Dalai Lama, *Heart of Compassion*, 2.

²⁷ Dalai Lama, *Power of Compassion*, 41.

²⁸ Dalai Lama, *Heart of Compassion*, 85.

and pride.²⁹ In addition, behaviors created by negative emotions not only bring suffering to the self but also cause hurt to others.³⁰

Buddhism suggests practical ways to overcome negative emotions when we are seriously caught in them. The first way is to distance ourselves from negative emotions.³¹ As the inner balance of mind is destroyed, the mind is overwhelmed by the negative emotions. Thus, keeping a distance from negative emotions helps diminish their power. The second practical way involves eliminating negative emotions while replacing them with positive qualities of mind like compassion. Buddhism points out that when positive emotions are cultivated through meditation or mindfulness, negative emotions lose their power.³² In sum, the practical way to deal with negative emotions is not only to eliminate negative emotions through keeping a distance from them, but also to cultivate positive emotions like compassion.

Meditation or Mindfulness as the True Path for Compassion

Buddhists believe that training of the mind through such practices as mindfulness or meditation is the most important way to achieve happiness and to overcome suffering on the path to compassion. According to the Dalai Lama, meditation or mindfulness can bring about control of the mind as a way to weaken causes of suffering. He describes two kinds of meditation to control the mind: analytical meditation and settled meditation. The first important principle of these meditations is to diminish and lessen negative emotions and thoughts that lead to suffering. The second is to replace negative emotions and thoughts with new ones through familiarizing ourselves with a chosen object. The chosen object is not a visible thing but a mental value

²⁹ Dalai Lama, *Open Heart*, 79.

³⁰ Dalai Lama, *Power of Compassion*, 42.

³¹ Dalai Lama, *Open Heart*, 19.

³² Dalai Lama, *Heart of Compassion*, 20–21.

designed to replace negative emotions and thoughts. Thus, when we contemplate mental values like compassion, we can replace negative emotions and thoughts with compassionate ones.³³

Analytical meditation entails contemplating compassion as a chosen object through rational processes of analysis. This rational process of analytical meditation enables us to be familiar with a chosen object, replacing negative thoughts with new ones. Conversely, settled meditation involves focusing on compassion as a chosen object, without any thinking or reasoning, and maintaining a compassionate feeling or emotion in the mind.³⁴ This meditation allows one to deepen the feeling of compassion. If the feeling of compassion decreases, we should refocus the analytical meditation to cultivate the feeling of compassion again. Thus, these meditations enable us to free ourselves from negative emotions and thoughts and to cultivate compassion.

Definitions and Philosophy of Compassion from Scientific and Social Scientific Perspectives

In the previous sections, compassion was mostly understood from Buddhist perspectives. In this part, compassion is defined from a variety of perspectives through an interdisciplinary study. I will explore definitions of compassion and approaches to understanding compassion and its development from scientific and social scientific perspectives such as physiology, psychology, family studies, and neuroscience.

Definitions of Compassion

First of all, in the linguistic meaning of compassion, “*passio*” means “to suffer” and “*cum*” means “with.” *Cum-passio* means “to suffer with.” Thus, compassion can be defined as participating in another’s suffering. Psychotherapist Paul Gilbert defines compassion as being open, sensitive, and responsive to the suffering of self and others without any defensive or

³³ Dalai Lama, *Open Heart*, 45–51.

³⁴ Dalai Lama, *Open Heart*, 51–52.

judgmental views.³⁵ The main characteristic of compassion is awareness of the suffering of oneself or another in which we have a desire to relieve the suffering.³⁶ Kristin Neff also describes compassion as accurate recognition of suffering and a desire to ease the suffering, understanding that human beings are not only weak and vulnerable but also valuable and worthy.³⁷ Thus, compassion has the capacity to heal our minds and bodies from destructive emotions causing suffering.

Considering current definitions of compassion from social scientific perspectives, I observe that most scholars in the West focus on not only suffering with another but also participating in the feelings of another. Lynn Underwood interprets *Cum-passio* as “to feel with,” which is a common understanding of the meaning of *compassion*.³⁸ This interpretation expands the meaning of compassion beyond suffering with another to experiencing the feelings of another. On the same note, David Graber and Maralynne Mitcham explain that compassion enables us to engage in another’s suffering and to participate in another’s feelings, going beyond a sense of sympathy.³⁹ They emphasize active participation in responding to the suffering and feelings of another. According to psychologist Hans-Werner Bierhoff, compassion is defined as “understanding of another person’s thoughts and feelings by putting oneself in the shoes of the other.”⁴⁰

³⁵ Paul Gilbert, “Introduction and Outline,” in *Compassion: Conceptualisations, Research and Use in Psychotherapy*, ed. Paul Gilbert (London: Routledge, 2005), 1.

³⁶ Paul Gilbert, *The Compassionate Mind: A New Approach to Life’s Challenges* (Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications, 2009), xiii.

³⁷ Kristin Neff, *Self-Compassion: Stop Beating Yourself Up and Leave Insecurity Behind* (New York: William Morrow, 2011), 10.

³⁸ Lynn G. Underwood, “Compassionate Love: A Framework for Research,” in *The Science of Compassionate Love: Theory, Research, and Applications*, ed. Beverley Fehr, Susan Sprecher, and Lynn G. Underwood (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 9.

³⁹ David R. Graber and Maralynne D. Mitcham, “Compassionate Clinicians: Exemplary Care in Hospital Settings,” in *The Science of Compassionate Love: Theory, Research, and Applications*, ed. Beverley Fehr, Susan Sprecher, and Lynn G. Underwood (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 346.

⁴⁰ Hans-Werner Bierhoff, “The Psychology of Compassion and Prosocial Behaviour,” in *Compassion: Conceptualisations, Research and Use in Psychotherapy*, ed. Paul Gilbert (London: Routledge, 2005), 148.

Participating in the suffering and feelings of another means connecting with the other. Sheila Wang defines compassion as “the feeling that arrives from the realization of the deeper reality that we are all connected, we are all one.”⁴¹ Moreover, according to Salena Brody and her colleagues, compassion is defined as authentic connection with another’s feelings and suffering, recognizing that the other is inclusive of myself.⁴² Thus, compassion emerges from awareness and feelings of interconnection with others.

Underwood defines compassion as attitudes and actions that devote the self in response to another’s suffering and in active participation in the feelings of another. Her definition of compassion focuses on giving the self for the flourishing of another through compassionate attitudes and actions.⁴³ The most interesting thing about her concept of compassion is that compassion can be expressed in words, attitudes, and actions through various processes such as motivation, cognition, emotions, and behaviors.⁴⁴

Underwood highlights five qualities of compassion. The first element of compassion is free choice that is not instinctive but deliberate and willful responses of self-sacrifice. The second is “accurate cognitive understanding of the situation, the other, and oneself.”⁴⁵ This means having an accurate understanding of one’s own disposition and personality, evaluating the needs and feelings of the other, and responding appropriately to the situation. The third quality of compassion is to value the other at a fundamental level without pity or superiority, and the fourth

⁴¹ Sheila Wang, “A Conceptual Framework for Integrating Research Related to the Physiology of Compassion and the Wisdom of Buddhist Teachings,” in *Compassion: Conceptualisations, Research and Use in Psychotherapy*, ed. Paul Gilbert (London: Routledge, 2005), 104.

⁴² Salena Brody, et al., “Compassionate Love for Individuals in Other Social Groups,” in *The Science of Compassionate Love: Theory, Research, and Applications*, ed. Beverley Fehr, Susan Sprecher, and Lynn G. Underwood (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 285.

⁴³ Underwood, “Compassionate Love: A Framework for Research,” 4. Underwood uses the term “compassionate love” to name her concept of compassion, because she wants to use the concept of compassion with various cultural, regional, and religious perspectives.

⁴⁴ Underwood, “Compassionate Love: A Framework for Research,” 4.

⁴⁵ Underwood, “Compassionate Love: A Framework for Research,” 7.

component is openness and receptivity to the feelings of another. The last element is the response of the heart with affective attitudes and actions as the core of one's being.⁴⁶ In sum, the qualities of compassion that Underwood names are related to will in terms of free choice, emotions, cognitions, and behaviors.

Gilbert also delineates that compassion occurs through the interaction of complex components such as intentions, emotions, cognitions, and behaviors. Compassion involves the intent to relieve the suffering of oneself and others and the emotions to be sensitive and open to suffering. Also, compassion includes accurate cognitions of the causes of suffering and how to respond to it. Finally, compassion includes behaviors such as words, attitudes, and caring actions.⁴⁷ Beverley Fehr and Susan Sprecher support Gilbert's ideas, explaining that compassion occurs in diverse spheres such as cognition, feelings and emotions, behaviors, and motivations.⁴⁸

Key Characteristics of Compassion

Compassion cannot be defined as an idea or a concept from social scientific or scientific perspectives. The reason is that compassion is expressed through the interaction of various processes or components. Shachan-Dupont depicts the various elements of compassion as follows: "an attitude, specific behaviors, cognitive predispositions, and expression of the neural-based bonding system, a dyadic phenomenon, and . . . a complex functional whole including appraisals, appreciations, patterned physiological responses, action tendencies, and instrumental behaviors."⁴⁹ Thus, compassion can be examined through the perspectives and studies of various disciplines. In this section, I will explore characteristics of compassion and issues that arise in

⁴⁶ Underwood, "Compassionate Love: A Framework for Research," 6–8.

⁴⁷ Gilbert, "Introduction and Outline," 1.

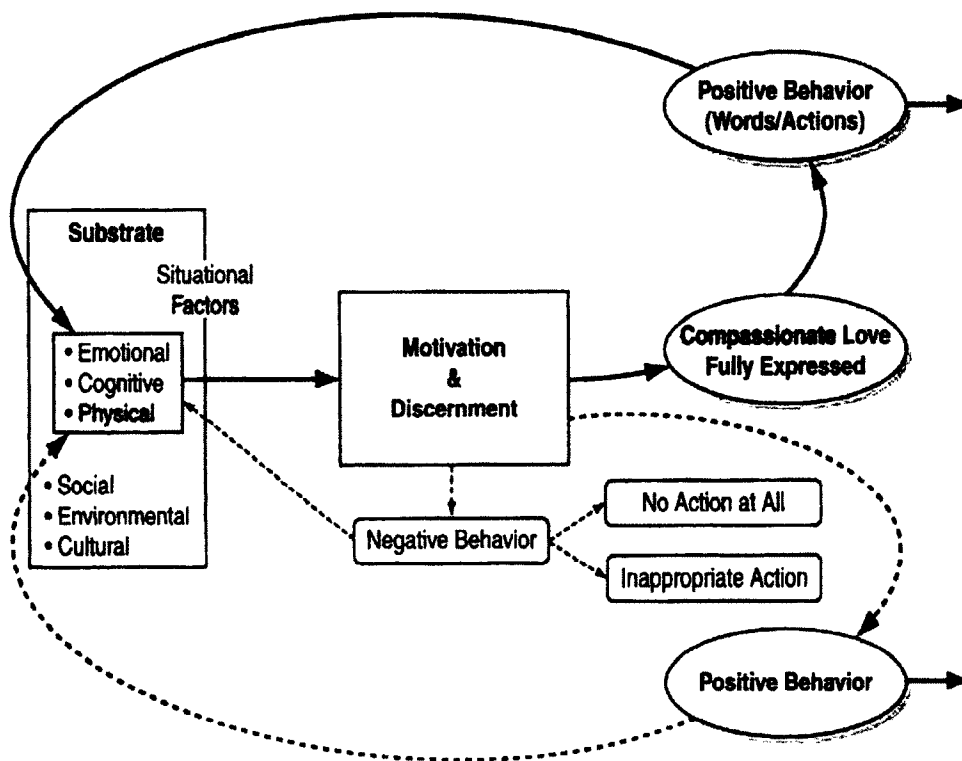
⁴⁸ Beverley Fehr and Susan Sprecher, "Compassionate Love: Conceptual, Measurement, and Relational Issues," in *The Science of Compassionate Love: Theory, Research, and Applications*, ed. Beverley Fehr, Susan Sprecher, and Lynn G. Underwood (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 31.

⁴⁹ Beverley Fehr and Susan Sprecher, "Compassionate Love: Conceptual, Measurement, and Relational Issues," 29.

relation to it through the lenses of several social scientific and scientific fields.

Working Model of Compassion

First, I will use the working model of compassion Underwood provides as a conceptual framework to approach the components of compassion. This model enables us to see the interaction of various factors in compassion and invites us into dialogue with these factors.



The Working Model of Compassion
Figure 1⁵⁰

As we meet different people, we find some have the disposition of a compassionate mind and are inclined toward compassionate behaviors, while others are self-centered and behave selfishly. We may ask why and how they have come to have such kinds of minds and behaviors. Underwood presents clear answers to these questions through the working model in Figure 1. According to her, all human beings have their own situational factors that influence whether they

⁵⁰ Underwood, "Compassionate Love: A Framework for Research," 10.

form compassionate minds and behaviors or not. She calls the situational factors the substrate in the left-hand side of Figure 1. The substrate of situational factors includes inner processes such as an individual's personality and emotional, cognitive, and physical disposition and abilities and external social forces such as familial, cultural, historical, and social environments. Underwood posits that the substrate is the foundation for the capacities of a compassionate mind and behaviors. Thus, there are individual variations in expressing compassion, because each individual has his or her own unique situational factors. In other words, the substrate of situational factors can influence how compassion is and can be expressed.⁵¹

Furthermore, Underwood's working model places motivation and discernment between the substrate and the expressions of compassion such as words, attitudes, and actions (see the center of the diagram). Motivation and discernment play an important role in the choices that are made to express compassion. Compassion begins in choice. Motivation for compassion is about wanting to participate in and relieve another's suffering. Discernment for compassion is to be able to accurately recognize the feelings and suffering of another and to make appropriate decisions for the well-being and needs of another. Compassion is unable to be expressed when people operate out of self-centered motives and exercise poor discernment about the feelings and needs of others. In summary, the words, attitudes, and actions of compassion result from an other-centered motivation and accurate discernment for the good and needs of another in the moment of choice.⁵²

Lisa Neff and Benjamin Karney support Underwood's idea that compassion is based in other-centered motivation that values the other rather than being self-centered. They also emphasize that mature awareness and discernment of another's suffering and feelings is a

⁵¹ Underwood, "Compassionate Love: A Framework for Research," 11–12.

⁵² Underwood, "Compassionate Love: A Framework for Research," 13–16.

significant prerequisite for compassion.⁵³ Similarly, Allen Omoto and his colleagues insist on the importance of free choice based on other-focused motivations in expressing compassion. In addition, they argue that discernment includes cognitive and emotional understandings as vital factors of compassion.⁵⁴ Cognitively and emotionally complex interactions result in mature awareness and discernment to respond to another's suffering and feelings.

According to Underwood's working model, through complex interactions of situational factors, motivation, and discernment, expressions of compassion such as words, attitudes, and actions can be expressed (see the right-hand side of Figure 1).

Attachment and Caregiving Behavioral Systems

In this subsection, I will explore how the situational factors of early experiences in the family environment influence individuals' capacities for compassion. To do this, I will focus on attachment and caregiving behavioral systems.

Brenda Volling and her colleagues argue that compassion expressed in adulthood is very much associated with early experiences in childhood. In short, early experiences can affect not only the ability to participate in another's suffering and feelings, but also the development of a compassionate mind and behaviors.⁵⁵

Focusing on the relationship between early childhood experiences and compassion, Mario Mikulincer and his colleagues build up the attachment system and caregiving behavioral

⁵³ Lisa A. Neff and Benjamin R. Karney, "Compassionate Love in Early Marriage," in *The Science of Compassionate Love: Theory, Research, and Applications*, ed. Beverley Fehr, Susan Sprecher, and Lynn G. Underwood (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 201–03.

⁵⁴ Allen M. Omoto, Anna M. Malsch, and Jorge A. Barraza, "Compassionate Acts: Motivations for and Correlates of Volunteerism Among Older Adults," in *The Science of Compassionate Love: Theory, Research, and Applications*, ed. Beverley Fehr, Susan Sprecher, and Lynn G. Underwood (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 262–63.

⁵⁵ Brenda L. Volling, Amy M. Kolak, and Denise E. Kennedy, "Empathy and Compassionate Love in Early Childhood: Development and Family Influence," in *The Science of Compassionate Love: Theory, Research, and Applications*, ed. Beverley Fehr, Susan Sprecher, and Lynn G. Underwood (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 162.

system theories developed by John Bowlby. When people face threats and dangers, the attachment system is activated and people seek protection and proximity from caregivers. People who consistently secure proximity and protection from attachment figures in childhood have a sense of attachment security that helps them deal with personal distress and develops in them feelings of love and esteem toward attachment figures and others. On the contrary, when a threatened person seeks out proximity and protection from attachment figures and the attachment figures repeatedly fail to respond to the dangers and threats, a sense of attachment security cannot be achieved, developing in the person fears and doubts in relation to attachment figures and others.⁵⁶

Mikulincer and his colleagues delineate two phenomena of negative interactions with attachment figures: hyperactivation and deactivation of the attachment system. The hyperactivation of the attachment system stimulates a person to excessively seek more attention, care, and support, while worrying about the absence of attachment figures. It requires a person to maintain a lot of physical, emotional, and cognitive intimacy with a relationship partner in order to feed the overactivity of the system. On the contrary, deactivation of the attachment system causes a person to avoid the intimacy and familiarity of attachment figures and to detach from physical, emotional, and cognitive relationships with attachment figures.⁵⁷

Human beings have an innate caregiving behavioral system that centers on the feelings and needs of others. Neff emphasizes that brain structures support an orientation toward caring for others.⁵⁸ This innate caregiving system makes it possible for persons to participate in the suffering of others as well as to reduce that suffering. It leads to the desire to provide protection

⁵⁶ Mario Mikulincer, Phillip R. Shaver, and Omri Gillath, "A Behavioral Systems Perspective on Compassionate Love," in *The Science of Compassionate Love: Theory, Research, and Applications*, ed. Beverley Fehr, Susan Sprecher, and Lynn G. Underwood (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 226–28.

⁵⁷ Mikulincer, Shaver, and Gillath, "Behavioral Systems Perspective on Compassionate Love," 228–30.

⁵⁸ Neff, *Self-Compassion*, 44.

for others from dangerous and harmful situation and to nurture the growth and development of others. The most significant factor in the caregiving behavioral system is an empathic stance in response to another's need and suffering. An empathic stance includes sensitivity to accurately discern another's suffering and feelings and responsiveness to meet another's needs when facing danger or harm.⁵⁹ In addition, Paul Gilbert argues that human beings' physiological systems orient them toward caregiving (to be discussed in the next subsection). A caregiving mentality provides the motivation for care, emotional concern, and cognitive analysis in response to the suffering and feelings of another. Thus, there are physical and psychological foundations for caregiving, which is a form of compassion.

The relationship between attachment systems and caregiving systems, as explained by Mikulincer and his colleagues, also deserves attention when considering the topic of compassion. When the attachment system is chronically activated by negative interactions with attachment figures or by danger and harm, it can interrupt the activation of the caregiving system with its empathic stance. People who do not attain attachment security are engrossed in their own protection and needs, rather than caring for others and relieving others' suffering. An avoidant attached person who escapes from relationship with attachment figures is likely to avoid intimacy and familiarity with others, deactivating their sensitivity and responsiveness toward others' needs and suffering. An anxious attached person is likely to endeavor to satisfy his or her own needs and vulnerabilities by selfishly seeking to obtain more intimacy and acceptance from another rather than paying attention to the other's needs and desires.⁶⁰ Thus, attachment insecurity can interfere with caregiving systems as well as a compassionate mind and behaviors.

⁵⁹ Mikulincer, Shaver, and Gillath, "Behavioral Systems Perspective on Compassionate Love," 230–32.

⁶⁰ Mikulincer, Shaver, and Gillath, "Behavioral Systems Perspective on Compassionate Love," 233–34.

Conversely, attachment security naturally leads to self-esteem and acceptance without a need for defensive self-protection, because a person feels physical, emotional, and cognitive intimacy with attachment figures. Moreover, when the sense of attachment security is achieved or restored, the caregiving behavioral system can be activated with accurate and sensitive understanding of another's suffering and feeling and responsiveness to needs of another rather than self-centered motives and benefits. Thus, attachment security and caregiving system enables a person to express compassion in response in the suffering and feeling of another.⁶¹ Therefore, we need to activate certain patterns of the attachment and caregiving systems in order to cultivate compassion.

Physiological Systems

Our physiological systems are biologically designed to respond to suffering. This subsection examines how physiological systems are related to compassion.

Paul Gilbert emphasizes the importance of physiological systems relating to compassion. Physiological systems are formed by genes and patterned by experiences in our brains and bodies. In other words, genes provide humans with basic abilities and our experiences shape the brain systems and physiological systems for our survival and safety. Thus, interactions between genes and early experiences are very vital factors to physiological systems that are grounded on motives, emotions, cognition, and behaviors.⁶² Gilbert delineates three types of physiological systems: the threat and self-protection system, the incentive and resource-seeking system, and the soothing and contentment system.⁶³ These systems interact with each other and produce emergent patterns of action through genes and repetitive experiences. Thus, we need to recognize

⁶¹ Paul Gilbert, "Compassion and Cruelty: A Biopsychosocial Approach," in *Compassion: Conceptualisations, Research and Use in Psychotherapy*, ed. Paul Gilbert (London: Routledge, 2005), 17.

⁶² Gilbert, "Compassion and Cruelty: A Biopsychosocial Approach," 11–13.

⁶³ Gilbert, *Compassionate Mind*, 22–27.

how these systems work in and through ourselves and how to balance these systems in ourselves.

First, the threat and self-protection system recognizes imminent threats and harms and instantly responds to them with defensive behaviors to secure self-protection and safety. The emergent behaviors of this system include anger, anxiety, disgust, aggression, flight, and depression as active or inhibitory reactions. The system works with the amygdala, a component of the limbic system within the temporal lobe of the brain. The amygdala plays an important role in the processes of emotion, such as fear, anger and pleasure, and it is especially sensitive to threats to survival. Cortisol, commonly called “the stress hormone,” also plays a role in the threat and self-protection system. It is released in response to stress and threats to a person’s well-being.⁶⁴ Excessive secretion of cortisol can affect the immune system and the brain by bringing about negative emotions such as depression, anxiety, anger, and arousal. Activation of the amygdala and secretion of cortisol are natural human responses designed to increase humans’ abilities to protect themselves and keep themselves safe, but chronic activation of the amygdala and elevated levels of cortisol can disrupt the tendencies to focus on the feelings and suffering of others and express compassion. The key function of the threat and self-protection system related to the amygdala and cortisol is to protect the self and to secure safety.

Second, the incentive and resource-seeking system plays the important role of causing humans to seek out resources for survival and flourishing. This system provides motivation, desire, and energy to accomplish our wants and improve our situations. It also gives us a sense of pleasure and excitement when our goals are achieved. However, we can experience frustration and disappointment when high expectations and desires for a lot of things hinder the realization of our goals. The incentive and resource-seeking system operates with the neurotransmitter dopamine, which regulates movement and emotional responses like pleasure and pain in the

⁶⁴ Gilbert, *Compassionate Mind*, 23.

brain.⁶⁵ Dopamine also helps control the reward systems of the brain, providing motivation to take action to move toward rewards.

Finally, the soothing and contentment system alleviates negative emotions and behaviors such as anger, anxiety, aggression, depression, and flight when the threat and self-protection system is overactivated. It also enables us to ease immoderate elevation of activities of seeking, achieving, and acquiring wants and desires. Thus, the primary function of this system is to balance the two other systems in order to provide feelings of safety, contentment, and inner peacefulness.⁶⁶ This system works with endorphins manufactured by the brain that generate feelings of safety, connectedness, and well-being. The hormone oxytocin is released when one hugs, touches, or interacts with another person.⁶⁷ High levels of oxytocin increase feelings of bonding, attachment, and social safety and connection, thus increasing recognition of and care for others. It also decreases negative and aggressive behaviors.⁶⁸

Compassion emerges from the balance and interaction of the three physiological systems described by Gilbert. The important thing to keep in mind is that a person who secures feelings of safety, contentment, and social bonding with another in the activation of the soothing system can also provide feelings of warmth, affection, and connection in response to the feelings of another. Thus, compassion emerges in particular from the activation of the soothing and contentment system. In light of this, Gilbert emphasizes the importance of practice and training to maintain the optimal functioning of the soothing and contentment system, so we are able to be compassionate.

The attachment system a person has in relationship with his or her parents and peers can

⁶⁵ Gilbert, *Compassionate Mind*, 23–24.

⁶⁶ Gilbert, *Compassionate Mind*, 168.

⁶⁷ Gilbert, *Compassionate Mind*, 24–25.

⁶⁸ Neff, *Self-Compassion*, 48.

affect the activation of that person's soothing and contentment system. For example, if parents do not provide their children with a sense of safety, protection, and warmth, the children cannot operate their soothing and contentment systems and they become engaged in chronic activation of the threat and self-protection system that provokes defensive behaviors such as anger, anxiety, submission, fight, and flight. Thus, the interaction of the soothing and contentment system with the attachment system affects the development and expression of compassion.⁶⁹

Sheila Wang describes a different set of physiological systems in relation to compassion as a human capacity. These are the self-preservative system, the species-preservative system, and the life-preservative system. The self-preservative system is designed to protect the self from threats and pain and to help secure safety. The species-preservative system expands the self into an inclusive self, recognizing that we humans are connected with each other. Finally, the life-preservative system, developed through the species-preservative system, honors the interconnection of all living things.⁷⁰

According to Wang, compassion emerges from the species-preservative system because the sense that we are all interconnected is one aspect of compassion. Thus, she reconceptualizes the idea of the separate self as an inclusive self interdependent and interconnected with family, community, humanity, and even all living things. Moreover, according to Linda Roberts and her colleagues, while the self-preservative system involves egosystem motivations focused on self-protection and safety, the species-preservative system affects the ecosystem by seeking to enhance the well-being and flourishing of all human beings.⁷¹

⁶⁹ Gilbert, "Compassion and Cruelty: A Biopsychosocial Approach," 20–34.

⁷⁰ Wang, "Conceptual Framework for Integrating Research Related to the Physiology of Compassion and the Wisdom of Buddhist Teachings," 75.

⁷¹ Linda J. Roberts, Meg Wise, and Lori L. DuBenske, "Compassionate Family Caregiving in the Light and Shadow of Death," in *The Science of Compassionate Love: Theory, Research, and Applications*, ed. Beverley Fehr, Susan Sprecher, and Lynn G. Underwood (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 313.

Wang depicts the species-preservative system as involving brain structures, the autonomic nervous system, and hormonal systems.⁷² In the brain, the self-preservative system is activated by pain and threats. It operates through amygdala circuits whose chronic activation gives rise to negative emotions such as aggression, fear, anxiety, and depression. However, the species-preservative system works with the thalamocingulate division of the limbic system that leads to a compassionate mind and behaviors such as care, interaction, bonding, and awareness of others. In addition, the species-preservative system expands the human neocortex, which deals with intelligence and conscience to support an “inclusive self.”⁷³

In the autonomic nervous system, the ventral vagal complex (VVC) plays an important role in regulating physiological conditions in order to secure safety. However, the self-preservative system activated by unsafe conditions interrupts activation of the VVC. Self-regulation through activation of the VVC can contribute to the cultivation of compassion through attention and mindfulness. Effective self-regulation leads us to have less stress from negative emotions, to accurately recognize internal states in the present moment, and to reduce self-focus, defensiveness, and the need for control.⁷⁴ Thus, effective self-regulation stimulates in us expressions of compassion, such as a willingness to approach others’ needs and suffering and a capacity for awareness of others with feelings of connection and friendliness.

In the hormonal systems, cortisol is related to the self-preservative system and is associated with negative emotions such as fear, depression, anxiety, and aggression. Oxytocin

⁷² Wang, “Conceptual Framework for Integrating Research Related to the Physiology of Compassion and the Wisdom of Buddhist Teachings,” 76–91.

⁷³ Wang, “Conceptual Framework for Integrating Research Related to the Physiology of Compassion and the Wisdom of Buddhist Teachings,” 76–79.

⁷⁴ Wang, “Conceptual Framework for Integrating Research Related to the Physiology of Compassion and the Wisdom of Buddhist Teachings,” 81–83.

operates with the species-preservative system and leads to caregiving, bonding, attachment, connectedness, and social safety.⁷⁵

In sum, compassion emerges from activation of the species-preservative system and the inclusive self that involves our brain structure, the autonomic and hormonal systems, and accessing a deep awareness of interconnectedness and oneness with other people. Thus, trainings for compassion are needed to activate physiological systems related to the species-preservative system and the soothing-contentment system.

Types of Cognition Related to Compassion

Just as physiological systems are one of the situational factors related to the development of compassion in the working model of Lynn Underwood, cognitive aspects can also be part of the substrate of situational factors. Thus, this subsection is designed to explore types of cognition related to compassion.

Human beings have the ability to think, reflect, stand back, and imagine. This ability is unique and different from animals. According to Gilbert, this ability is referred to as “the new brain and mind.”⁷⁶ The old brain and mind respond to threats to safety through physiological systems, without any reflective thinking. The old brain and mind includes natural, automatic, and instant reactions. On the contrary, the new brain and mind has reflective, imaginative, and creative abilities. It enables us to stand back from our automatic and instant reactions and to recognize our own feelings in relation to others. An important characteristic of the new brain and mind is the capability to create a new world in our imagination. Imagination enables us to anticipate the suffering and feelings of others.⁷⁷ It also helps us to understand and recognize

⁷⁵ Wang, “Conceptual Framework for Integrating Research Related to the Physiology of Compassion and the Wisdom of Buddhist Teachings,” 83–90.

⁷⁶ Gilbert, *Compassionate Mind*, 181.

⁷⁷ Gilbert, *Compassionate Mind*, 181–85.

others' thoughts and feelings. The new brain and mind plays an important role on the road to compassion.

Gilbert defines compassion as recognizing the suffering and feelings of another and identifying the causes of that suffering and those feelings. In terms of cognition, he mentions the theory of mind in relation to compassion as a unique human trait. The theory of mind premises that human beings have their own minds and no one can assess the mind of another. We can only assume that another's mind and thoughts are analogous with our own. So, it is possible for us to predict the thoughts and behaviors of another in analogy with our own selves. The theory of mind is the ability to understand the emotions, thoughts, motivations, and behaviors of others.⁷⁸ Daniel Drubach posits a primary factor of the theory of mind as "the ability of an individual to place him/herself in another person's mind and thereafter to see and feel the world from the other's perspective."⁷⁹ Thus, it enables a person to recognize the cognitive and emotional status of another. In addition, the theory of mind leads to a sense of *we-ness* and interconnectedness that encourages participation in the suffering and feelings of others and expressions of compassion.⁸⁰ Thus, it comes as no surprise that the theory of mind is deeply related to compassion.

In addition, Gilbert discusses the social mentalities theory that a person has a social mentality to seek out relationship and intimacy with others. Therefore, our social mentality leads us to feelings, motivations, thoughts, and behaviors driving us to secure a relationship with another and to recognize what is needed for the development of that relationship. If we secure a right relationship with another, it provides us with a sense of being cared for and connected with

⁷⁸ Gilbert, "Compassion and Cruelty: A Biopsychosocial Approach," 35–37.

⁷⁹ Daniel A. Drubach, "The Purpose and Neurobiology of Theory of Mind Functions," *Journal of Religion and Health* 47, no. 3 (2008): 354.

⁸⁰ Gilbert, "Compassion and Cruelty: A Biopsychosocial Approach," 36.

another. However, if the social mentality is interrupted by disapproval from another, we can experience a sense of disconnectedness and separateness from others.⁸¹ Thus, a certain pattern of social mentality in human consciousness is an essential factor for having compassion for others.

Salena Brody and her colleagues provide a cognitive “self-expansion model” related to compassion, defining compassion as “an authentic connection to the other where the other becomes to some extent part of the self.”⁸² The model describes an expansion of the self so that the thoughts and views of others are included within the self. An important cautionary point in the model is that the self is not excluded from participating in the feelings of others. Thus, “the inclusion of other in the self” encourages us to feel and participate in the physical, emotional, and cognitional situation of another within the self.⁸³ In other words, self-expansion enables us to break down the barrier between self and others and to freely cross the space between us, recognizing that the other becomes part of the self. Thus, as the self expands, it becomes a larger self that includes humanity and nature.⁸⁴

Social Ecologies

I have explored the complex interactions of genes, physical and physiological systems, and cognitions that affect the development of compassion and issues related to compassion so far. This subsection will focus on how human beings’ capacities for compassion are affected by social ecologies that include diverse values, belief systems, and self-identities.

According to Gilbert, different social ecologies build up different self-identities, because common social values and belief systems strongly influence the self-identity development of persons within those ecologies. Thus, a social ecology that values care, safety, sympathy, and

⁸¹ Gilbert, *Compassionate Mind*, 100–12.

⁸² Brody et al., “Compassionate Love for Individuals in Other Social Groups,” 285.

⁸³ Brody et al., “Compassionate Love for Individuals in Other Social Groups,” 286.

⁸⁴ Brody et al., “Compassionate Love for Individuals in Other Social Groups,” 286–88.

warmth for others creates a self-identity that values the needs and well-being of others. Conversely, a social ecology in which people frequently criticize self and others creates a self-identity of criticism of self and others.⁸⁵ A culture and ecology of criticism that devalues connectedness and oneness can disrupt the formation of compassion. A social ecology that aims toward compassion fosters self-identities of personal motivation toward compassion.⁸⁶ Therefore, our self-identities and personal psychologies originate in our social ecologies and social psychologies.

Bierhoff also emphasizes that socialization can affect the development of compassion. For example, a family or social ecology that is responsive and sensitive to a person who is faced by social threats and harm contributes to the formation of a self-identity that is responsive and sensitive to the suffering and feelings of others. Thus, the development of compassion can be influenced by social dispositions and is related to social responsibility.⁸⁷

In sum, compassion emerges from the complex interaction of genes, physiological systems, psychologies, self-identities, and social ecologies.

⁸⁵ Neff, *Self-Compassion*, 27.

⁸⁶ Gilbert, "Compassion and Cruelty: A Biopsychosocial Approach," 55–64.

⁸⁷ Bierhoff, "Psychology of Compassion and Prosocial Behaviour," 152.

Chapter 3

Meditation or Practices for Compassion Formation from Buddhist Perspectives and Secular Areas such as Scientific and Social Scientific Perspectives

Chapter 3 will cover actual meditation or practices that cultivate compassion in the framework of Buddhist and secular perspectives. In the first part, three styles of Buddhist compassion meditation or practice will be explored: meditation for compassion based on the perspectives of the Dalai Lama, *Lojong* practice that is used to cultivate compassion in Tibetan Buddhism, Metta practices which is based on a desire that all beings be free from suffering and enjoy happiness. The second part will explore four kinds of practices for nurturing compassion: Compassion Cultivation Training (CCT) from the Center for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education (CCARE), Compassionate Mind Training (CMT) by Paul Gilbert, Active Imagination which was first formulated by Carl Gustav Jung, and Internal Family Systems (IFS).

Compassion-Cultivation Meditation Practices from Buddhist Perspectives

Meditation for Compassion Based on the Perspectives of The Dalai Lama

The Dalai Lama defines compassion as “the wish that others be free of suffering.”¹ According to him, in order to develop a compassionate mind and behaviors, the first stage is to have an empathetic attitude toward and familiarity with others.² The reason is that the closer we are to a person, the more compassion can be cultivated. Compassion grows according to the degree of closeness to another. One way of cultivating empathy toward and familiarity with others involves meditating on the awareness that all human beings want happiness and aspire to overcome suffering. As we ourselves want happiness and a lack of suffering, others also have aspirations for happiness and freedom from suffering. This is based on a sense of equality,

¹ Dalai Lama, *Open Heart*, ix.

² Dalai Lama, *Open Heart*, 91.

recognizing that all human beings are equal and have the same right to be happy.³ A second way to develop appreciation of others is to contemplate the idea of dependent origination⁴—we are interconnected with each other as interdependent beings. Our present happiness is created not by ourselves but by others. In fact, all objects we currently possess are provided through the countless processes of others. We also exist in the presence of others' existences.⁵ Thus, the more we recognize and appreciate others, the more compassion toward others can be cultivated.

After cultivating empathy and closeness with others, the second stage of meditation for cultivating compassion involves recognizing the suffering of others. The Dalai Lama emphasizes that the most powerful meditation for recognizing others' suffering is to extend the experience of one's own suffering into the suffering of others.⁶ While contemplating the afflictive feelings of one's own suffering, one comes to understand and acknowledge others' suffering. Unless one recognizes one's own suffering, one does not become aware of others' suffering. In other words, profound understanding of one's own suffering helps one acknowledge others' suffering. Cultivating compassion through extending one's understanding of the nature of suffering begins with extending recognition to a loved one (like a child, parent, or spouse) or to friends we care for, then to a neutral person with whom we don't have any connection, and finally, even to an enemy who has or is harming us. Thus, compassion toward others can be cultivated through continuous meditation on others' suffering based on an awareness of one's own experiences of suffering.

Definition and Characteristics of Calm Abiding as a Practical Meditation. The Dalai Lama provides “calm abiding” as a meditation practice for engaging in the contemplations

³ Dalai Lama, *Open Heart*, 113.

⁴ Dalai Lama, *Open Heart*, 92.

⁵ Dalai Lama, *Heart of Compassion: A Practical Approach to a Meaningful Life*, 68.

⁶ Dalai Lama, *Open Heart*, 93.

mentioned above. The goal of calm abiding is single-pointed concentration in which one chooses an object and places one's mind on the chosen object. In the calm abiding meditation, one's mind remains focused on the chosen object of meditation without any distractions from external objects.⁷ Moreover, concentrating on a chosen object enables one to experience freedom from mental laxity and excitement and to possess bliss and pliancy in both physical and mental aspects.⁸

Calm abiding meditation should maintain the two qualities of stability and clarity in focusing on an object.⁹ The mind is easily distracted by miscellaneous thoughts that disturb single-pointed contemplation. If one's mind is not settled and stable, if it is confused and blurred in focus, one cannot attain a quality of clarity. Thus, one needs the qualities of stability and clarity to rest one's mind on the object and to concentrate on it. In this respect, The Dalai Lama emphasizes mindfulness as the way to maintain a settled and clear mind for calm abiding meditation. Mindfulness enables one to settle the scattered and drifting mind into a stable and clear mind and to focus on the present moment without any judgment.

Objects of Calm Abiding. According to the Dalai Lama, an object that one chooses to focus on can be a visual or religious symbol, such as the Holy Cross, the Virgin Mary, or Buddha's statue.¹⁰ The reason for choosing a visual or physical object is for one to become close to the chosen object in order that one can discover mental qualities expressed through involvement in such images or symbols. Thus, calm abiding meditation cannot just be accomplished through a sensual consciousness or mechanism but requires the processes of the inner mind connected to the senses. In the case of concentrating with a sensual consciousness on

⁷ Dalai Lama, *Open Heart*, 129.

⁸ Dalai Lama, *Stages of Meditation*, 107.

⁹ Dalai Lama, *Open Heart*, 131.

¹⁰ Dalai Lama, *Open Heart*, 130.

the Holy Cross as an object for calm abiding meditation, the Cross is not merely a statue but a mental image that evokes mental values and qualities like love through cognitive processes in the mind.¹¹ In sum, a chosen object can call into being positive mental qualities such as warmth, empathy, sympathy, loving-kindness, and compassion. For instance, when one is captured by afflictive emotions such as attachment, anger, hatred, greed, jealousy, or pride, one can concentrate on an object with positive mental qualities in order to oppose the afflictive emotions. This is called “an object for purifying afflictive emotions” in Buddhism.¹² If one suffers from an afflictive emotion like hatred or anger toward others, one would focus on loving-kindness for others as an object. A person who struggles with attachment or greed would concentrate on emptiness. In this view, we can use compassion as an object that we concentrate on exercising toward others, such as a loved one, a neutral person, or even someone who has harmed us. Thus, while one concentrates on visual or physical images and mental qualities in one’s mind, one is engaged in the process of calm abiding meditation.

Five Faults and Eight Antidotes for Calm Abiding Meditation. There are five faults that can interrupt calm abiding meditation and eight antidotes to overcome them. The five faults are laziness, forgetting the object of meditation, mental laxity or excitement, non-application of the antidotes, and over-application of the antidotes.¹³ The eight antidotes are faith, aspiration, exertion, pliancy, mindfulness, conscientiousness or introspection, application of the necessary antidotes, and restraint of over-application of the antidotes.¹⁴

The first fault, laziness, is defined as “a mental factor which, through its own power,

¹¹ Dalai Lama, “The Path to Calm Abiding,” in *The Gethsemani Encounter: A Dialogue on the Spiritual Life by Buddhist and Christian Monastics*, ed. Donald W Mitchell and James A Wiseman (New York: Continuum, 1998), 78–79.

¹² Dalai Lama, “The Path to Calm Abiding,” 77.

¹³ Dalai Lama, “The Path to Calm Abiding,” 76.

¹⁴ Dalai Lama, *Stages of Meditation*, 115.

causes procrastination with respect to cultivating meditative stabilization.”¹⁵ There are three kinds of laziness: the “laziness of neutral activities, laziness as non-virtuous activities, and laziness of inadequacy.”¹⁶ The first kind of laziness consists of neutral activities like sleep that cause a loss of clarity, meditative stabilization, and continuous observation of the object during meditation. The second kind of laziness entails engagement in and attachment to non-virtuous activities that obstruct meditation. For instance, when a person is hurt by someone, the person experiences anger toward those who have harmed him or her. Then, when the person participates in meditation to heal the afflictive emotion, he or she is distracted by the afflictive emotion during meditation, and so is not healed. Rather, the person just thinks about what he or she can do to those who have harmed him or her. The third kind of laziness is the laziness of inadequacy that renounces achieving the noble natures through calm abiding meditation.¹⁷

The antidotes for laziness include faith, aspiration, exertion, and pliancy. Faith means absolute trust in the benefits and effects of meditation practice in daily life. Such faith brings aspiration to completely participate in meditation for overcoming laziness and achieving the state of calm abiding. In fact, the stabilization of meditation is supported by authentic exertion and perseverance, resulting in the experience of mental and physical bliss and pliancy. Finally, pliancy as an antidote for laziness is about making one’s physical body light and supple. Also, it enables one to settle the mind on a chosen object because one can flexibly deal with being distracted by external objects.¹⁸

With regard to the second fault of forgetting the object of meditation, mindfulness is the

¹⁵ Geshe Gedün Lodrö, *Calm Abiding and Special Insight: Achieving Spiritual Transformation through Meditation*, Textual Studies and Translations in Indo-Tibetan Buddhism (Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion Publications, 1998), 70.

¹⁶ Lodrö, *Calm Abiding and Special Insight*, 71.

¹⁷ Lodrö, *Calm Abiding and Special Insight*, 71–72.

¹⁸ Dalai Lama, “Path to Calm Abiding,” 76–77.

antidote to overcome it. First of all, mindfulness enables one to focus on the chosen object and not forget it by protecting one from being distracted by too many thoughts. Through mindfulness, one becomes familiar with the object by discovering authentic mental values expressed by it. Moreover, mindfulness invites one to participate in the process of calm abiding.¹⁹ The sixth antidote, introspection, helps one maintain mindfulness and overcome mental laxity and excitement. While mindfulness helps one to keep focusing on an object, introspection observes the mind's state and whether the mind remains focused on a chosen object of meditation or not.

In terms of the fault of mental laxity or excitement, mental laxity arises from laziness and is produced three ways: "by diminution of intensity of meditative stabilization; through sleepiness or lethargy; [and] by the mind's being overly withdrawn inside."²⁰ These things cause a mental laxity that destroys the internal sensitivity and clarity of the mind in its state of meditative stabilization. Thus, when one experiences mental laxity in one's own mind, the intensity of meditative stabilization decreases and one no longer concentrates on one's chosen object. Even though one is in the process of meditation, the meditation is not effective and helpful for focusing on the object. Mental excitement is also a fault that obstructs the cultivation of calm abiding. It arises when one is absorbed in objects of desire and reflects on the joys and enjoyments of the past. It is through such desires and remembrances of past experiences that the mind is scattered and drifts away to other objects. Thus, the objects of desire and past enjoyable experiences disturb the cultivation of meditative stabilization.²¹

In this respect, it is through developing introspection that a mentally dull mind can be awakened and uplifted and stability, sensitivity, and clarity can be restored. Mental excitement can also be reduced by introspectively observing what is happening in one's mind and body as

¹⁹ Dalai Lama, "Path to Calm Abiding," 79.

²⁰ Lodrö, *Calm Abiding and Special Insight*, 78.

²¹ Dalai Lama, *Stages of Meditation*, 117.

one chases an object of desire. According to The Dalai Lama, introspection plays an important role in inspecting one's mind and body in the present moment and watching over the state of one's mind as the mind concentrates on a chosen object.²² In sum, introspection can be an antidote for mental laxity and excitement by eliminating distractions.

Regarding the fault of the non-application of antidotes, if one experiences mental laxity or excitement in the middle of meditating on an object, unless one applies antidotes to them, one's mind will be distracted. Thus, the antidote for the fourth error is application of the antidotes for mental laxity or excitement. In terms of the fifth fault of over-application of the antidotes, the antidote is simply to stop applying antidotes.

Development of Calm Abiding. Calm abiding can be attained by eliminating the five faults and applying the eight antidotes. Moreover, calm abiding is achieved through the process of nine stages that deal with the five faults through reliance on the eight antidotes.²³ The first stage, "setting the mind," is a basic step to set the mind on an object of meditation.²⁴ It is not easy to keep setting the mind on an object. Persons are easily distracted by many other thoughts and conceptions that deter them from continually focusing on their chosen object. Thus, in this stage, one often needs to keep placing the mind back on the object.

The second stage, called, "continuous setting," is one in which a person can maintain the state of concentrating on a chosen object for a long time, unlike in the first stage. In this stage, one is not disrupted by any distractions during the time of focusing. However, one still has more of a scattered mind than a focused mind during the meditation time. Thus, the first two faults of mental laziness and forgetting the object occur in the first and second stages of the development

²² Dalai Lama, *Stages of Meditation*, 117–19.

²³ Dalai Lama, *Open Heart*, 141–45.

²⁴ Lodrö, *Calm Abiding and Special Insight*, 70.

of calm abiding.²⁵

In the third stage of “resetting,” one intends to settle the mind on an object, but one’s mind drifts away from the chosen object. In this stage, one can maintain control of one’s mind at will to meditate on a chosen object whenever the mind is distracted. In the case of forgetting the object, mindfulness as an antidote for forgetfulness enables one to put oneself in the state of non-forgetfulness of the object of observation.²⁶

In the fourth stage of “close setting,” one is able to maintain concentration on a chosen object for a long time through the power of strong mindfulness. Thus, one is not distracted by laziness or forgetfulness but comes to experience a subtle laxity and excitement while focusing on the object. Laziness and forgetting the object have greater power to disturb the process of calm abiding in the first three stages than do mental laxity and excitement. However, in this stage, mental laxity and excitement arise to disturb calm abiding meditation.²⁷

In the fifth stage of “disciplining,” introspection is produced as an antidote to mental laxity and excitement. As described previously, introspection enables one to observe mental laxity and excitement. The sixth stage of “pacifying” entails remaining tranquil in one’s mind and ensuring that no subtle laxity and excitement occurs in the process of introspection. In this stage, the practice of introspection is more powerful than in the fifth stage. It enables one to recognize that mental laxity and excitement are arising, to identify their phenomena, and to revivify and uplift the mind. It is through the process of introspection that one can continually maintain a state of meditative stabilization and extend its time.²⁸

The seventh stage is called “thorough pacifying” and involves completely controlling

²⁵ Dalai Lama, *Open Heart*, 142.

²⁶ Lodrö, *Calm Abiding and Special Insight*, 73-77

²⁷ Lodrö, *Calm Abiding and Special Insight*, 77.

²⁸ Lodrö, *Calm Abiding and Special Insight*, 82-88.

mental laxity and excitement in one's mind in order to cultivate calm abiding. Mental laxity and excitement no longer arise in this stage. It is through continuous efforts that one can attain meditative stabilization. There are six forms of these continual efforts: "intense application, continuous application, causally concordant application, effort arising from application, undisturbed effort, and effort which is insatiable."²⁹ These forms of effort assist in the cultivation of calm abiding and prevent it from being obstructed.

The eighth stage is called "single-pointed."³⁰ In this stage, one is free from mental laxity and excitement while focusing on a chosen object and is not distracted. In this stage, mindfulness and introspection are still operative in the process of maintaining meditative stabilization. However, one does not need to rely on mindfulness and introspection because mental laxity and excitement have become dormant through the cultivation of calm abiding.³¹

The final stage, "setting in equipoise," involves sustaining focus on an object as much as one intends without any effort. Thus, calm abiding arises in the ninth stage, which means one is able to focus on a chosen object with single-pointed concentration. In this stage, the most important thing is to balance a single-pointed concentration with analysis of one's mind, maintaining clarity and sensitivity of the mind.³²

Lojong Practice for Cultivating Compassion

Definition and Concepts of Lojong Practice. Lojong practice enables us to free ourselves from suffering, awaken our dormant minds, and develop compassionate hearts. It leads us to live a compassionate life for ourselves, other people (including our enemies), and all sentient beings. Lojong is a really powerful practice that cultivates compassion. Thus, in this section, I will

²⁹ Lodrö, *Calm Abiding and Special Insight*, 88–89.

³⁰ Dalai Lama, *Open Heart*, 144.

³¹ Lodrö, *Calm Abiding and Special Insight*, 89.

³² Dalai Lama, *Open Heart*, 144–45.

explore the definition of lojong meditation and what its authentic meanings and issues are.

In Tibetan, *lo* literally means “mind” and *jong* means “to train.”³³ Thus, the word *lojong* means “training the mind.” From the perspective of Tibetan Buddhism, *lo* is clearly related not only to human consciousness and awareness but also the mind’s activities of discerning, realizing, reflecting, and discriminating the phenomena of objects and human experiences. So it is very critical that the mind has any attitudes and views. The mind’s awareness of the phenomena of objects and human experiences is determined by the mind’s perspectives. Therefore, Tibetan Buddhism emphasizes the importance of training the mind, since *jong* means to recognize and distinguish phenomena coming from within ourselves and others related to suffering and inner peace.

According to Pema Chödrön, the fundamental concept of lojong practice is to make friends with negative and afflictive thoughts and emotions and to cultivate positive qualities or emotions within us and others. For instance, when one experiences pain, the practice of lojong encourages one not to avoid the affliction emotions and negative thought but to hold and embrace them.³⁴ In this respect, lojong aims to cultivate the recognition of one’s emotions and thoughts in the present moment so as not to miss the moment of right here, to develop accurate awareness of objects and human experiences in freedom from suffering, and to experience happiness through training the mind.

Logong practices are based in the Mahayana school of Buddhism, whose principles are related to having a compassionate life free from suffering and for the happiness of others. These principles provide clear answers about the causes of suffering (why suffering arises) and the generation of negative emotions due to suffering. The fundamental reason for suffering and

³³ Traleg Kyabgon, *The Practice of Lojong: Cultivating Compassion through Training the Mind* (Boston: Shambhala, 2007), 7.

³⁴ Pema Chödrön, *Start Where You Are*, 6–7.

negative emotions is understood as self-centered and self-absorbed perspectives that bring about afflictive emotions and distorted thinking.³⁵ Moreover, it is through lojong practices that people come to realize that we and others are not separate beings but interdependent beings, thus eradicating the misconception of being separate and independent beings.³⁶ Thus, in the lojong practices, the seven points of mind training, which originated from a Tibetan text called, *The Root Text of the Seven Points of Training the Mind*, help one cultivate how to recognize oneself, how to deal with suffering and afflictive emotions, and how to develop compassion for oneself and others. Thus, it is through the seven points of mind training that the distorted mind in its imperfect, egocentric, and self-absorbed state can be transformed into “perfection,” possessing altruistic, selfless, and emptying abilities. Perfection emerges from recognition of one’s own imperfection, including one’s egoistic perceptions, through mind training. Thus, lojong practice based on the seven points of mind training enable us to free ourselves from suffering and negative emotions, observe what happens to ourselves in each present moment, and participate in activities of freeing all sentient beings from suffering. Furthermore, lojong practice cultivates positive emotions of the mind and eradicates negative emotions. It begins from developing compassion for one’s own suffering and results in the cultivation of compassion for all sentient beings. As a result, a life of lojong practice leads to a compassionate life.³⁷

The Seven Points of Training the Mind. Lojong practice consists of two elements: the practice called “tonglen meditation” and the teachings that are referred to as “the seven points of training the mind.”

With respect to lojong teachings, the seven points of mind training are derived from a

³⁵ Traleg Kyabgon, *Practice of Lojong*, 9.

³⁶ Pema Chödrön, *Start Where You Are*, x.

³⁷ Traleg Kyabgon, *Practice of Lojong*, 8–9.

Tibetan text called, *The Root Text of The Seven Points of Training the Mind*.³⁸ The mind training consists of the following seven points: (1) The Preliminaries, Which Are a Basis for Dharma; (2) The Actual Practice: The Cultivation of Bodhicitta; (3) Transforming Adversity into the Path of Awakening; (4) Maintaining the Practice in Our Whole Lives; (5) Measuring the Success of Mind Training; (6) Disciplines of Mind Training; and (7) Guidelines for Mind Training.³⁹ The seven points of mind training contain fifty-nine practical principles to liberate persons from afflictive emotions and suffering and to awaken the compassionate mind.

The first point of mind training, “The Preliminaries, Which Are a Basis for Dharma,” includes the first slogan: “First, train in the preliminaries.” In the practice of *lojong*, Pema Chödrön considers the preliminaries to constitute the most basic meditation. One example of a preliminary, basic meditation is the shamatha-vipashyana practice. Shamatha-vipashyana meditation enables us to be aware of the breath going out and in, recognizing the present moment we are in without any analysis, just observation.⁴⁰ In the teachings of *lojong*, the preliminaries involve recognizing the precious human body as a spiritual vehicle for enlightenment and realizing the impermanence of everything worldly, our dissatisfactory natures, and karmic causes and effects.⁴¹

The second point emphasizes the actual practice of the cultivation of bodhicitta, or the awakening mind. The cultivation of bodhicitta is comprised of two aspects. One is “relative bodhicitta,” which is understood as the cultivation of a compassionate heart. The other is “absolute bodhicitta,” which can be explained as the natural, open, empty state of being. It is

³⁸ Chekawa Yeshe Dorje, “Seven-Point Mind Training,” in *Essential Mind Training: Tibetan Wisdom for Daily Life*, ed. and trans. Thupten Jinpa (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2011), 39–41.

³⁹ Jamgon Kongtrul, *The Great Path of Awakening: The Classic Guide to Lojong, a Tibetan Buddhist Practice for Cultivating the Heart of Compassion* (Boston: Shambhala, 2005), 89–92.

⁴⁰ Pema Chödrön, *Start Where You Are*, 12.

⁴¹ Traleg Kyabgon, *Practice of Lojong*, 15–28.

called wisdom.⁴² If the goal of lojong practice is to attain the cultivation of relative bodhicitta, absolute bodhicitta is an important means of mind training for achieving a compassionate heart. According to Traleg Kyabgon, if one attains a compassionate heart as relative bodhicitta through mind training, one has already achieved the state of the awakening mind. On the contrary, if one reaches a calm stabilization of the natural state, this naturally leads to the cultivation of a compassionate heart. Therefore, he emphasizes that relative bodhicitta is clearly related to absolute bodhicitta.⁴³ The second point is comprised of nine slogans. With respect to absolute bodhicitta, there are five slogans: regard all dharmas as dreams; examine the nature of unborn awareness; even the remedy is free to self-liberate; rest in the natural state, the basis of all; and in postmeditation, be a child of illusion. In relative bodhicitta, there are four slogans: train in sending and taking in alternatively—these two should ride the breath; three objects, three poisons, three seeds of virtue; use the sayings to train in all forms of activity; and begin the sequence of exchange with yourself.⁴⁴

The third point of mind training is concerned with transforming adversity into the path of awakening. It describes how to train the mind when one confronts misfortune and miserable environments. Specifically, it allows one to accept unwanted and unfavorable situations as a meaningful means for attaining the awakening mind. Thus, everything that happens around us, including fortune and misfortune, is an actual way to attain the awakening mind.⁴⁵ The third point consists of six slogans, the eleventh through the sixteenth: (1) When beings and the world are filled with evil, transform unfavorable circumstances into the path of enlightenment. (2) Drive all blames into one. (3) Meditate on the great kindness of everyone. (4) To see confusion

⁴² Pema Chödrön, *Start Where You Are*, 12.

⁴³ Traleg Kyabgon, *Practice of Lojong*, 29–31.

⁴⁴ Traleg Kyabgon, *Practice of Lojong*, 41–81.

⁴⁵ Pema Chödrön, *Start Where You Are*, 44.

as the four kayas, the protection of emptiness is unsurpassable. (5) Four applications are the best method. (6) Immediately join whatever you meet with meditation.⁴⁶

The fourth point is about maintaining the practice for the duration of our lives. In this point, the main goal is to continue practicing meditation during our lives and at the time of death. Therefore, it provides direction for how to practice meditation throughout our lives, including in the moment of death. In particular, the fourth point emphasizes the practice of five powers—a strong impetus, familiarization, virtuous seeds, repudiation of egocentric thoughts, and aspiration—in order to maintain meditation.⁴⁷ It contains two slogans about how to live and die in the continuum of meditation: the first provides a summary of the essential instructions of how to train in the five powers; the second states that the Mahayana instructions on how to die are the five powers.⁴⁸

The fifth point of mind training is dedicated to measuring the success of mind training. Through mind training, we ourselves evaluate our meditation practice, whether we are trying to attain a compassionate heart as relative bodhicitta and the awakening mind as absolute bodhicitta or whether we just remain in a delusory mental state of egocentric obsession and ignorance.⁴⁹ Each slogan in this point emphasizes that the main subject in the practice of meditation and the evaluation of success or failure is oneself. In this respect, Chödrön asserts the importance of the self, explaining that “the main thing about this practice and about all practices is that you’re the only one who knows what is opening and what is closing down.”⁵⁰ The four slogans of the fifth point (the nineteenth through the twenty-second slogans) are as follows: all Dharma agrees at one point; of the two witnesses, hold the principal one; always maintain only a joyful mind; and

⁴⁶ Traleg Kyabgon, *Practice of Lojong*, 82–119.

⁴⁷ Jamgon Kongtrul, *Great Path of Awakening*, 25–26.

⁴⁸ Traleg Kyabgon, *Practice of Lojong*, 120–46.

⁴⁹ Traleg Kyabgon, *Practice of Lojong*, 147.

⁵⁰ Pema Chödrön, *Start Where You Are*, 89.

if you can practice even when distracted, you are well trained.⁵¹

The sixth point is designed for the commitments of mind training, which are helpful and important factors for compassionate action, exchanging oneself for others. This point naturally invites us to keep the commitments with a strong determination and freedom from common human desire. In this respect, it consists of sixteen slogans: (1) Always practice the three general principles of keeping the commitment, refraining from distorted forms of thinking, and refraining from falling into partiality. (2) Change your attitude, but remain natural. (3) Do not talk about others' weak points. (4) Do not think about the affairs of others. (5) Work on the stronger disturbing emotions first. (6) Give up all hope for results. (7) Give up poisonous foods. (8) Do not rely on your good nature. (9) Do not react on impulse to critical remarks. (10) Do not wait in ambush. (11) Do not make insincere comments. (12) Do not shift an ox's burden to a cow. (13) Do not aim to win. (14) Do not put an exchange value on things. (15) Do not turn gods into demons. (16) Do not seek others' pain as a means to happiness.⁵²

The seventh point is about practical guidelines for mind training to awaken the mind toward a compassionate heart in daily life. If the previous point emphasizes normative practices for the awakening mind, a variety of slogans in this point express fundamental cores of lojong practice for maintaining a compassionate heart. The seventh point includes twenty-one principles, the thirty-ninth through the fifty-nine: All spiritual practices should be done with one intention. All corrections are made in one way. At the beginning and at the end, two things need to be done, one at each point. Whichever of the two occurs, be patient. Observe these two, even at the risk of your own life. Learn the three difficult points. Acquire the three root causes. Don't allow these three things to diminish. Make the three inseparable. Train in all areas without partiality. Always

⁵¹ Traleg Kyabgon, *Practice of Lojong*, 147-64.

⁵² Traleg Kyabgon, *Practice of Lojong*, 165-97.

meditate on difficult points. Do not depend on external conditions. This time, practice the important points. Avoid misunderstandings. Do not fluctuate. Train wholeheartedly. Find freedom through investigation and examination. Do not expect gratitude. Do not react impulsively with anger or irritation. Do not be like an open book. Do not expect people to make a fuss over what you are doing.⁵³

Tonglen Meditation as Lojong Practice. Tonglen practice enables us to awaken a compassionate heart for ourselves and for others with openness and clarity. In Buddhism, tonglen is a practice for attaining relative and absolute bodhicitta. In Tibetan, the word *tonglen* means “taking in and sending out.”⁵⁴ The real practice of tonglen is designed to take in darkness and negativities, such as the suffering of oneself and others, and to send out light, joy, and compassion for the sake of the happiness of all sentient beings.⁵⁵ Thus, tonglen practice is the opposite of most meditations, in which practitioners breathe in light and goodness and breathe out darkness and negativities. It also reverses natural human tendencies and habitual activities in which one breathes in what one wants and breathes out what one egocentrically rejects. In tonglen practice, one breathes in what one would prefer to reject and breathes out what one desires. This means that one gives up one’s self-centric and self-obsessed nature and accepts the suffering of others.⁵⁶ In other words, the goal of tonglen is to exchange oneself for others. According to Judith Lief, a Buddhist teacher, tonglen practice begins with focusing on oneself and being self-absorbed, then recognizing the equality of oneself and others beyond any partiality to oneself, and finally arriving at a place of exchanging oneself for others.⁵⁷

⁵³ Traleg Kyabgon, *Practice of Lojong*, 198–233.

⁵⁴ Pema Chödrön, *Start Where You Are*, x.

⁵⁵ Pema Chödrön, *The Places That Scare You: a Guide to Fearlessness in Difficult Times* (Boston: Shambhala, 2005), 73.

⁵⁶ Judith Lief, “Tonglen: The Practice of Transformation,” in *Quiet Mind: A Beginner’s Guide to Meditation*, ed. Susan Piver (Boston: Shambhala, 2008), 72.

⁵⁷ Lief, “Tonglen: The Practice of Transformation,” 72.

Thus, through tonglen practice, with respect to the compassion practice, one breathes in the pain and suffering of oneself and others and breathes out compassion and loving-kindness for others, wishing oneself, others, and even all sentient beings freedom from suffering. Tonglen practice invites us to connect with self, others, and the world, participating in all the sufferings of the world.⁵⁸

There are four stages in the tonglen practice. The first stage is described as the moment of the open and still mind. It is as if one is in the absolute bodhicitta, which is a natural, open, and empty state. In this stage, the mind is not fixed or attached to any ideas, but is open, empty, and flexible. While focusing on breathing in and out, one can let go of fixed and inflexible ideas, such as an egocentric attitude or self-absorption, through mindfulness. To attain openness and stillness in the first stage, one can meditate on an object that is a spacious place, such as an ocean or a clear blue sky.⁵⁹

The second stage involves breathing in claustrophobic qualities—dark, heavy, hot, and thick—and breathing out positive qualities, such as white, light, cool, fresh, and spacious. Pema Chödrön encourages people to visualize claustrophobic characteristics as “coal dust or yellow-brown smog” and to imagine positive qualities as “brilliant moonlight or the colors of a rainbow.”⁶⁰ In this stage of tonglen, one should take in dark, heavy, and hot and send out white, light, cool, and fresh through all the pores of one’s own body. This stage should be practiced until breathing in and out and taking in claustrophobic energy and sending out positive qualities occur at the same time.⁶¹ Furthermore, the length of time of breathing in should be the same as breathing out. In other words, one should maintain a balance between taking in and sending out

⁵⁸ Raphael Cushnir, *How Now: 100 Ways to Celebrate the Present Moment* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2005), 102.

⁵⁹ Pema Chödrön, *Places That Scare You*, 74–76.

⁶⁰ Pema Chödrön, *Places That Scare You*, 76.

⁶¹ Pema Chödrön, *Start Where You Are*, 38.

in order to be successful at the practice of tonglen.

In the third stage, one begins to breathe in and out for a specific person who is experiencing suffering. First, while one inhales, one is trying to open one's mind to accept the pain of someone else. As one exhales, one is trying to send out openness and spaciousness. One repeatedly practices this process of breathing in and out until it can automatically be synchronized. Next, one breathes in the suffering and pain of the specific individual, wishing that person freedom from suffering. One then breathes out relief, kindness, and happiness for the person of focus. If relief, kindness, or happiness seems theoretical and abstract, one can visualize concrete images, such as a good meal, a cup of coffee, or a bunch of flowers, for the special individual on the moment of sending out. The special one can include a homeless person, a loved one, someone suffering from a disease, or even oneself.⁶² Also, through the practice of tonglen for a specific individual, when one breathes in the attitudes and views of self-absorption and self-obsession, one can dissolve negativities such as self-preoccupation into open space or emptiness. It is important that one does not keep negativity and darkness in one's mind and then have to frequently dissolve them into spacious openness. As one breathes out, one sends out compassion and loving-kindness for a select person. These processes naturally lead to the fourth stage.⁶³

The fourth stage of tonglen practice extends the process of accepting the suffering of a specific individual and sending out compassion to that individual to doing this for all sentient beings that are suffering. In this stage, one takes in the suffering and pain of others, wishing all sentient beings freedom from suffering. After dissolving the suffering of others into spacious openness, one sends out compassion and loving-kindness to all sentient beings that are frightened and suffering. If one cannot engage the suffering of all others, one is practicing the third and

⁶² Pema Chödrön, *Start Where You Are*, 39.

⁶³ Tenzin Palmo, *Reflections on a Mountain Lake : Teachings on Practical Buddhism* (Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion Publications, 2002), 182–83.

fourth stages of tonglen at the same time. Thus, while one is practicing tonglen for a specific person or oneself (the third stage), one can extend the object of tonglen practice to others who have the same suffering, connecting one's own suffering with others' suffering.⁶⁴ This stage reminds us to eliminate our primary delusion that we and others are separate beings and to generate a compassionate heart that understands we and others are interdependent. In this respect, when we breathe in the sufferings of others, we come to discern others' sufferings as our sufferings.⁶⁵ Thus, tonglen practice is about exchanging oneself for others. It is just not for our own benefit or other people's benefit but for the benefit of all sentient beings.

Metta Practice for Cultivating Compassion

Definition and Understanding of Metta Practice. Human beings want no suffering and desire happiness. In their desire to achieve happiness, all human beings have the same right to be happy. *Metta* practice encourages us to engage in seeking happiness in oneself and others.

Metta is a Pali word and is generally translated as “loving-kindness” in English.⁶⁶ *Metta* includes diverse meanings, such as friendliness, love, benevolence, concord, good will, and non-violence. Christopher Germer, a clinical psychologist, defines *Metta* as “universal, unselfish, all-embracing love” in inclusive and full expression.⁶⁷ According to Ratnapani, a member of the Western Buddhist Order, *Metta* is “a wish for the welfare of other beings, human and non-human, without any self-reference—that is, without wanting or expecting anything in return.”⁶⁸ Therefore, while compassion is a wish that all human beings be free from their suffering, *Metta* can be understood as a wish that all beings achieve happiness. What is truly remarkable

⁶⁴ Pema Chödrön, *Places That Scare You*, 76.

⁶⁵ Tenzin Palmo, *Reflections on a Mountain Lake*, 183.

⁶⁶ Christopher K. Germer, *The Mindful Path to Self-Compassion: Freeing Yourself from Destructive Thoughts and Emotions* (New York: Guilford Press, 2009), 131. “Pali is the language in which the Buddha's words were originally recorded in the first century BCE, 400 years after he died.”

⁶⁷ Germer, *Mindful Path to Self-Compassion*, 130.

⁶⁸ Ratnapani, “Introduction,” in *Metta: The Practice of Loving Kindness* (Birmingham: Windhorse Publications, 2000), 3.

about *Metta* practice is that its purpose is not to have good feelings within ourselves or to feel good about others, but to have a wish that all human beings be happy and free from suffering.

The concrete methods and instructions of *Metta* practice that we now know were introduced by Buddhagosa, a famous commentator of the Theravada tradition of Buddhism in the fifth century. The teaching of Buddha for loving-kindness referred to *Metta* practice as an antidote for fear. *Metta*, in the instructions of Buddha, helps those filled with fear to be free from it and enables them not to be overwhelmed by fear. Buddhagosa developed the brief instructions of Buddha into practical and detailed meditations and teachings on how to cultivate *Metta* or loving-kindness in daily life. Buddhagosa considers *Metta* practice to begin from loving-kindness for oneself. It is said that when we are trying to achieve happiness in ourselves through *Metta* practice, we also are seeking to cultivate others' happiness as well.⁶⁹

The most interesting thing in *Metta* practice is that the human body is the most important and basic foundation for doing *Metta* practice. In the views of *Metta* practice, we can recognize our negative or positive emotions within our body. Our body responds to our emotions the fastest. In addition, we can sometimes transform our negative emotions into positive emotions through our bodies. In other words, the human body is closely related to emotions and thoughts. Thus, with bodily awareness, we can concentrate on our emotions, thoughts, and motivations to cultivate loving-kindness. The body can be a starting point where we recognize our specific emotional states in the present moment.⁷⁰

Bodily awareness is closely related with mindfulness in *Metta* practice. One of the most important methods of *Metta* practice is mindfulness, which enables us to see what happens to us in the present moment and to recognize our pain. When we are aware of our pain, loving-

⁶⁹ Sharon Salzberg, "Metta: The Practice of Compassion," in *Quiet Mind: A Beginner's Guide to Meditation*, ed. Susan Piver (Boston: Shambhala, 2008), 55–58.

⁷⁰ Ratnapani, "Introduction," 10.

kindness for ourselves comes to us. If there is a difference between *Metta* practice and mindfulness, it is that “*Metta* practice uses the power of connection, whereas mindfulness meditation primarily uses attention.”⁷¹ In other words, while mindfulness focuses on what is happening to us in the present moment, *Metta* practice concentrates on the person who is suffering in the present moment, connecting the other person or our inner self with our conscious self. However, *Metta* practice is not accomplished without mindfulness. Mindfulness is the most important foundation for *Metta* practice.

Metta practice has four elements to cultivate loving-kindness for oneself and others: intention, attention, emotion, and connection.⁷² There is a clear intention when we do *Metta* practice that we wish for all human beings to be happy. The intention of loving-kindness for oneself and others provides one with meaning and goals in life. While we repeat *Metta* phrases for happiness for oneself and others, we became attentive through softening and stabilizing our minds. Intention and attention brings into being positive emotions such as compassion, tenderness, kindness, friendliness, and love. Furthermore, these emotions lead us to connect with the pains and feelings of others in the same way we felt our own suffering. In addition, each of these elements helps the other elements to be activated when any element becomes dormant. Thus, we cultivate loving-kindness for ourselves and others through the interaction of intention, attention, emotion, and connection.

In *Metta* practice, words are considered very powerful in forming our experiences, thoughts, emotions, and motivations: “Words can be more powerful than actions. A broken bone can heal in a few months, but a harsh word can create a wound that doesn’t heal in an entire

⁷¹ Germer, *Mindful Path to Self-Compassion*, 133.

⁷² Germer, *Mindful Path to Self-Compassion*, 162.

lifetime.”⁷³ In other words, our thoughts, emotions, and motivations will differ depending on the words we use. Thus, in *Metta* practice, we consistently use the same *Metta* phrases that include words related to happiness and welfare for ourselves and others. When we use the same *Metta* phrases again and again, we will be calmed, feel deep pain, and cultivate compassion and desire for the happiness of ourselves and others. Moreover, repetitive usage of *Metta* phrases enables us to go into contemplative meditation to discover the deep meanings of *Metta* phrases, to have our minds taken over by the meanings, and to take action on our new awarenesses in daily life.⁷⁴

Metta practice is divided into five or six stages according to the objects for loving-kindness. While there are processes of meditation in other compassion practices, each object is a process in *Metta* practice. According to Sharon Salzberg, there are six groups of objects for loving-kindness: ourselves, a benefactor who makes us feel warm and grateful, beloved friends whom we trust and love, a neutral person whom we neither like nor dislike, a difficult person who gives us pain and conflict, and all beings.⁷⁵ Christopher Germer also names six stages of *Metta* practice to cultivate loving-kindness for ourselves, a benefactor, friends, a neutral person, a difficult person, and finally, all beings.⁷⁶ Ratnapani rules out benefactors as objects and divides *Metta* practice into five stages: “ourselves, a good friend, a neutral person, an enemy or difficult person, and all sentient beings.”⁷⁷ I will explore the six stages of *Metta* practice below.

Description of Metta Practice. Before we do *Metta* practice, we need to check whether we have the four qualities of contentment, confidence, enthusiasm, and kindness. First, we should determine if we are feeling content or not. If we are content, we focus on the feeling and begin meditation. But if we are not content with our situation, we cannot begin *Metta* practice.

⁷³ Germer, *Mindful Path to Self-Compassion*, 136.

⁷⁴ Germer, *Mindful Path to Self-Compassion*, 136–38.

⁷⁵ Salzberg, “Metta: The Practice of Compassion,” 58–60.

⁷⁶ Germer, *Mindful Path to Self-Compassion*, 167–68.

⁷⁷ Ratnapani, “Introduction,” 13.

Therefore, we should observe why we are not satisfied and deal with the fundamental causes of our discontentment. The second element we need is confidence. We should not have any fear that we will not do *Metta* practice well or not cultivate loving-kindness well within us. So we have to remove our fear of failing in meditation and go into the world of *Metta* practice with a sense of confidence. Third, we need enthusiasm for loving-kindness meditation. If we do not have any enthusiasm for loving-kindness, the intention and goal for cultivating loving-kindness disappear and our attention wanders. The fourth quality required during the meditation of *Metta* practice is kindness for oneself and others. The quality of kindness makes it possible for us to open our minds to self and others. A sense of kindness naturally leads us to go into *Metta* practice.⁷⁸

The first stage of *Metta* practice is loving-kindness for oneself. When we begin *Metta* practice, we first focus on ourselves with loving-kindness by accepting our suffering and happiness.⁷⁹ Without loving oneself, loving-kindness for others cannot be achieved. Loving-kindness for oneself is a starting point for moving into loving-kindness for beloved friends, a neutral person, a difficult person, and all sentient beings.⁸⁰ Germer suggests a few ways to develop loving-kindness for ourselves. The first one is to open up to our own pain. When we are aware of and open to pain, loving-kindness and compassion arise within us. The second is to discover good qualities within ourselves, such as friendliness, kindness, fellowship, and loyalty, and to develop them. Awareness of good qualities within ourselves provides us with feelings of worth and respectability.⁸¹ A traditional method of *Metta* practice is to send *Metta* phrases

⁷⁸ Ratnapani, "Introduction," 11–12.

⁷⁹ Nhat Hanh, Thich, *Making Space: Creating a Home Meditation Practice* (Berkeley, CA: Parallax Press, 2012), 59.

⁸⁰ Abhaya, "Putting Oneself First," in *Metta: The Practice Of Loving Kindness* (Birmingham: Windhorse Publications, 2000), 24.

⁸¹ Germer, *Mindful Path to Self-Compassion*, 142–45.

toward ourselves and repeat them with a sense of loving-kindness, for example, “May I be free from danger. May I be happy. May I be healthy. May I live with ease.”⁸² While repeating these phrases, we reflect on their meanings. If repeating the phrases does not provide any intention, emotion, attention, or connection for loving-kindness toward oneself, we are just engaged in meaningless repetition. The important thing in repeating *Metta* phrases is that we discover the meanings of the phrases and reflect on them by wishing happiness for ourselves. If we cannot engage in these phrases with any emotion or intention, we recall an event from the past where we felt safe, happy, healthy, and at ease. We carry these feelings into the present moment, reflect on them, and repeat the *Metta* phrases again with these feelings, wishing ourselves well.⁸³ This practice causes us to fall into loving-kindness for ourselves through attention, good will, positive emotions, and connection with ourselves.

I will explain the loving-kindness meditation for oneself in detail. The meditation may last for twenty minutes. We sit in a comfortable position, close our eyes, and naturally breathe in and out from the heart. We focus on our breathing and calm our mind. Then we imagine ourselves sitting in our position as if we are watching ourselves from a distance. We observe the emotions, thoughts, and motivations within our body while maintaining a focus on breathing in and out. We remind ourselves that all beings want happiness and freedom from suffering. While we are aware of feelings of loving-kindness, we send the *Metta* phrases toward ourselves, repeating, “May I be free from danger. May I be happy. May I be healthy. May I live with ease.” We can repeat a phrase or word that is most meaningful to us, such as “May I be happy,” or “happy,” if this is necessary to cultivate loving-kindness for ourselves. We focus on the emotions, intentions, attention, and connections for loving-kindness that emerge through

⁸² Salzberg, “Metta: The Practice of Compassion,” 58.

⁸³ Abhaya, “Putting Oneself First,” 26.

repeating these phrases. If our mind wanders off, we recall an event where we felt happy and safe and focus on the feelings from that event. Then we go back to repeating the phrases with loving-kindness for ourselves. When we feel enough loving-kindness for ourselves, while breathing in and out, we finish the meditation by opening our eyes.⁸⁴ After we have meditated for loving-kindness for ourselves, we can go to the next stage.

The second stage of *Metta* practice is loving-kindness for a benefactor who makes us smile and feel warmth and love. The benefactor can be “a beloved teacher, a spiritual guide, a mentor, a child, a pet, or something we love in nature.”⁸⁵ In other words, benefactors are people or things for which we are grateful. This meditation will be more easy and natural than meditating ourselves. It will also take twenty minutes. Through breathing in and out, we focus on our mind and imagine an image of ourselves sitting in our current position. We remind ourselves of the wish that all beings will be happy and well and send the same phrases used in the first stage toward ourselves for five minutes. Then we bring images of our benefactor into our mind and recognize how we feel toward him, her, or it. We send *Metta* phrases to the benefactor and reflect on their meanings: “May you be free from danger. May you be happy. May you be healthy. May you live with ease.” If our mind wanders off, we focus on the meanings of these phrases and the image of the benefactor.⁸⁶ Once we feel enough loving-kindness for the benefactor, we can go to the next stage.

The third stage of *Metta* practice is about loving-kindness for a beloved friend whom we trust. After bringing our focus to breathing in and out and sending the same phrases toward ourselves and benefactor for a few minutes as described above, we imagine an image of our beloved friend and observe how we feel toward them by allowing their presence to arise in our

⁸⁴ Germer, *Mindful Path to Self-Compassion*, 134–35.

⁸⁵ Germer, *Mindful Path to Self-Compassion*, 168.

⁸⁶ Germer, *Mindful Path to Self-Compassion*, 169.

mind.⁸⁷ We focus on feelings of warmth and kindness and send the same *Metta* phrases for a benefactor to our friend. However, while we repeat these phrases, negative emotions such as anxiety and anger can arise because we are worried about our friend's safety or feelings of anger toward the friend based in past experiences come up. When such emotions overwhelm our mind and interrupt our meditation, we return to the *Metta* phrases and their authentic meanings or to the prior stages of meditation for ourselves and a benefactor.⁸⁸ If we do not engage in the meanings of the *Metta* phrases, we can recall a memory when we were happy with or grateful for our friend or we can imagine that our friend wants to live in happiness. The positive feelings that accompany these good memories will flow into our mind and help us feel loving-kindness for our friend through wishing that they achieve happiness. The *Metta* practice of repeating the phrases with positive feelings allows us to connect with our friends and to enlarge the scope of loving-kindness to include more people as in the next stage.

The fourth stage is designed to practice loving-kindness for a neutral person whom we neither like nor dislike. This stage is a very important opportunity and transition to enlarge loving-kindness from oneself or a close one to a neutral person in whom we are not interested. This obviously is a challenge for us to develop our *Metta* practice. Neutral persons can be anyone whom we meet in the street, market, or while traveling and have no strong feelings toward. When we begin loving-kindness meditation for a neutral person, it is difficult for us to feel positive emotions and to have good will for loving-kindness toward the person. Our focus is also easily lost and our image of the neutral person tends to fade away during the meditation. This is because we have a lack of interest, emotional limitations, laziness, selfishness, and prejudices that prevent us from engaging with the neutral person. In other words, we are not

⁸⁷ Vidyasri, "Opening the Floodgates," in *Metta: The Practice Of Loving Kindness* (Birmingham: Windhorse Publications, 2000), 29.

⁸⁸ Germer, *Mindful Path to Self-Compassion*, 170–71.

connected with them.⁸⁹ In the meditation, we practice the meditations of the three prior stages, beginning with the first stage. Then we imagine an image of the neutral person in our mind, experience his or her presence, observe how we feel, and send the *Metta* phrases we used in the prior two stages, cultivating feelings of friendliness and loving-kindness toward the person.⁹⁰ To develop loving-kindness for the neutral person, we should be aware of our common humanity and feel genuine gratitude for this person. First of all, we should recognize our common human desires to not suffer and to be happy by repeating the *Metta* phrases, “May you be free from danger. May you be happy. May you be healthy. May you live with ease.” Perceiving our shared humanity in that the neutral person has his or her own sufferings and joys helps us to overcome dualistic ideas between self and others and to recognize the neutral person as our sister, brother, or friend. In other words, this stage leads us to reflect that all human beings are closely interrelated. Second, while repeating these phrases, we contemplate gratitude for the benefits received from the neutral person, such as vegetables, clothes, and furniture, that we have used to maintain our lives. At this time, we can experience a feeling of gratitude toward the neutral person. The feelings of gratitude can naturally lead to positive emotions toward the neutral person and even cultivate loving-kindness for the neutral person in the *Metta* practice by wishing that the person be well and happy.⁹¹

In the fifth stage, we practice loving-kindness for a difficult person with whom we have had conflict or who has hurt us. While loving-kindness meditation for the neutral person is very inclusive and broad, loving-kindness for the difficult person requires us to deepen the scope of

⁸⁹ Dhammadinna, “Breaking Down the Barriers of Prejudice,” in *Metta: The Practice Of Loving Kindness* (Birmingham: Windhorse Publications, 2000), 36–39.

⁹⁰ Germer, *Mindful Path to Self-Compassion*, 172–73.

⁹¹ Dhammadinna, “Breaking Down the Barriers of Prejudice,” 39–43.

Metta practice to go beyond our emotional limitations.⁹² In this stage, we do not deny negative emotions such as anger, pain, sadness, fear, aversion, or guilt that we have in relation to an enemy or difficult person. We also do not unconditionally accept abuse, violence, or cruelty from this person. Rather, we develop loving-kindness for our enemies and difficult persons.⁹³ In the meditation, we first practice the prior stages and engage in loving-kindness for self, a benefactor, a beloved friend, and a neutral person. After loving-kindness for them flows within us enough, we imagine an image of a difficult person or enemy and become aware of how we feel. We observe what happens within us by sending the same *Metta* phrases toward them. However, when we bring up the image of this difficult person, negative feelings such as anger, pain, sadness, fear, aversion, and guilt can arise. At that time, we should maintain a balance so as not to be overwhelmed by such negative emotions. If the negative emotions take over our mind, we separate our mind from such feelings, clear the image in our mind, and go back to prior stages by reconnecting with loving-kindness for self, a benefactor, and a beloved friend.⁹⁴ Moreover, we name negative emotions happening within us as anger, sadness, guilt, and so on. These processes cause us to purify and distill the negative emotions we have toward the difficult person. To engage in loving-kindness for our enemy or a difficult person, we imagine that we stand in our enemy's perspective and participate in his or her sufferings and joys. Furthermore, we imagine that we dwell in his or her body, see the world with his or her eyes, and experience the situations he or she experiences. These imaginations in the meditation enable us to overcome our limited scopes of loving-kindness for close friends and put us in others' shoes. Also, they cause negative emotions to be lighter and more faint toward our enemies. Through *Metta* practice, loving-

⁹² Germer, *Mindful Path to Self-Compassion*, 173.

⁹³ Salzberg, "Metta: The Practice of Compassion," 60.

⁹⁴ Chris Pauling, "The Alchemy of Emotion," in *Metta: The Practice Of Loving Kindness* (Birmingham: Windhorse Publications, 2000), 44–45.

kindness for the difficult person gradually decreases the negative emotions felt in relation to him or her.⁹⁵ As soon as we get to this stage, we can practice loving-kindness for all beings.

In the final stage, we engage in *Metta* practice for all beings everywhere without any discrimination, limitation, or exception. In fact, the ultimate goal of *Metta* practice is to extend loving-kindness to all beings.⁹⁶ Before we practice the loving-kindness meditation of the final stage, we start with the first stage of loving-kindness for oneself and move through all the stages to the fifth stage of *Metta* practice for the difficult person. Then we observe how our emotions can be transformed into loving-kindness for each object or person. We send the same *Metta* phrases toward the five kinds of people equally, including oneself, a benefactor, a beloved friend, a neutral person, and a difficult person.⁹⁷ This means that our loving-kindness is equal for each person without any discrimination or differentiation. *Metta* practice applied equally to all people enables us to overcome any obstacles to non-discriminatory loving-kindness.⁹⁸ This leads us to move into loving-kindness for all beings. We direct feelings of friendliness, love, benevolence, and loving-kindness for all beings everywhere with the following *Metta* phrases: “May all beings be free from danger. May all beings be happy. May all beings be healthy. May all beings live with ease.”⁹⁹ In *Metta* practice, as we recognize the common desire of all beings to be free from suffering and to experience happiness and the equality of all beings, we expand our loving-kindness for all beings “on the street, the locality, the town, the region, the country, the continent, and all the different continents of the world.”¹⁰⁰ Thus, *Metta* can be defined as universal loving-kindness.

⁹⁵ Pauling, “The Alchemy of Emotion,” 45–47.

⁹⁶ Salzberg, “Metta: The Practice of Compassion,” 60.

⁹⁷ Ratnapani, “Introduction,” 20.

⁹⁸ Lokamitra, “Opening Our Hearts to the World,” in *Metta: The Practice Of Loving Kindness* (Birmingham: Windhorse Publications, 2000), 51.

⁹⁹ Salzberg, “Metta: The Practice of Compassion,” 60.

¹⁰⁰ Lokamitra, “Opening Our Hearts to the World,” 51.

Meditation Practices from Scientific and Social Perspectives that Cultivate Compassion

In Chapter 2, I explored definitions of compassion and approaches to understanding compassion and its development from scientific and social perspectives, such as physiology, psychology, family studies, and neuroscience. Based on such approaches and definitions of compassion, here I will explore meditation practices for cultivating compassion that have emerged from scientific perspectives. Four kinds of meditation will be examined: Compassion Cultivation Training (CCT) from the Center for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education (CCARE), Compassionate Mind Training (CMT) by Paul Gilbert, Active Imagination developed by Carl Gustav Jung, and Internal Family Systems (IFS) with respect to compassion building.

Compassion Cultivation Training (CCT)

The Compassion Cultivation Training (CCT) program is provided by the Center for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education (CCARE) at the Stanford Institute for Neuro-Innovation and Translational Neuroscience at Stanford University. CCT is an eight-week program whose goal is to cultivate a compassionate mind and heart in each person, so each one wishes her- or himself and others freedom from suffering. Meditations provided through CCT are based on compassion cultivation practices from Tibetan Buddhism. Lynn Underwood, a medical researcher, describes compassion as developing through the interaction of various processes, including physical, emotional, cognitive, and motivational processes, in her working model of compassion.¹⁰¹ Likewise, CCT understands that compassion emerges from an interaction of diverse components: cognitive awareness of the suffering and feelings of others; sympathetic or empathetic concern about the suffering of others; a desire and intent that others be free from suffering and pain; and motivation to participate in and relieve others' suffering

¹⁰¹ Underwood, "Compassionate Love: A Framework for Research," 10.

through compassion.¹⁰²

In the Compassion Cultivation Training, compassion emerges from humans' basic abilities to preserve their lives and achieve their own well-being that leads to feelings of empathy for others. In other words, to have empathy for others, one first should want to eradicate one's own suffering and pain and then one will be able to achieve a sense of connection that one's own suffering is related to others' suffering. Thus, CCT emphasizes two kinds of recognition for cultivating compassion: first, being sensitive and responsive to one's own suffering and pain, and second, putting oneself in others' shoes with a sense of connection with others. These two awarenesses as empathetic concerns enable people to have compassionate minds and hearts; knowing that others' suffering is the same as one's own suffering, one is sensitive to and responsive to the sufferings of others. Through such understandings of compassion, CCT's compassion practices demonstrate the influence of Tibetan Buddhist practices on them in that they seek to cultivate a deep awareness that oneself and others have the same suffering, a desire to overcome suffering, and a desire for happiness. Moreover, compassion practices cultivate an empathetic concern through which one gains a sense of appreciation for others through a recognition that one is an interdependent being, dependent on the existence of others. This recognition results in a cultivation of compassion toward others.¹⁰³

Structure and Understandings of CCT. The Compassion Cultivation Training (CCT) program is an eight-week course that has a two-hour session once a week. Each session consists of four parts: "a guided group meditation"; teaching based on meditation and related to the subject matter of the current step, plus group discussion; diverse practical exercises and

¹⁰² Thupten Jinpa, *Compassion Cultivation Training Program: An Eight-Week Course on Cultivating Compassionate Heart and Mind*, The Center for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education, 2010 (Stanford: Trustees of Stanford University, 2009), 1.

¹⁰³ Thupten Jinpa, *Compassion Cultivation Training Program*, 2.

meditation in connection to the week's topic; and suggestions for daily home practice.

Compassion Cultivation Training (CCT) is divided into six steps, although it is an eight-week program. The first step is designed to settle the mind and to focus it. In this step, one is trained in the most basic meditation, which is to still and settle the mind and to sustain focus through breathing in and out. In this stage, there are two breathing meditation exercises, called “cleansing breath” and “counting exercises,” designed to bring relaxation and relief to one's mind. In the cleansing breath exercise, one breathes in and out according to one's natural rhythm through one's nostrils, sending inner messages of relaxation and relief to oneself. When the pace of breathing in and out is natural, one visualizes cleansing negative emotions such as anger, worry, anxiety, and stress out of the mind as the mind becomes calm and still. While taking a deep and slow cleansing breath seven times, one sends negative emotions out, recognizing what is happening in one's mind. In the cleansing breath exercise, one needs to rearrange breathing in and out, maintaining a natural rhythm of breathing without forcing it. This settles the mind into the present moment according to the rhythm of breath. Following the practice of cleansing breath, one can begin silent mental counting exercises, whose goal is to maintain the settled and stilled mind. The basic exercise consists of counting the cycle of breathing in and out until one reaches five. After finishing one set of five, the practitioner goes back to one and counts to five again, repeating this cycle several times. Thus, in the first step, breathing exercises help sustain focus in the present moment.¹⁰⁴

The second step, “Loving-Kindness and Compassion for a Loved One,” aims to realize positive emotions, such as loving-kindness, warmth, empathy, and compassion, toward a loved one through meditation and practices. Here a loved one can be the most important person in one's life— a child, parent, husband, wife, friend, or some other significant person. In this stage,

¹⁰⁴ Thupten Jinpa, *Compassion Cultivation Training Program*, 5–13.

meditation and practices through which one visualizes a loved one suffering from diseases bring up feelings of a compassionate mind and heart toward the loved one. In the process of such meditation, one needs to recognize what happens to one physically, psychologically, emotionally, and mentally. In this step, the pedagogical instruction explains the relationship between experience and perception: one's experiences in the world affect one's perceptions of the world and one's perceptions of the world shape one's experiences connected to those perceptions. Thus, perceptions and experiences are vital resources for meditation as one seeks to develop a compassionate mind and heart toward a loved one. This step includes exercises that involve remembering and recreating a destructive feeling and a positive feeling. Through the exercises, one observes the physical, psychological, and mental states that coincide with a destructive or positive feeling. These exercises enable one to realize the differences between negative and positive feelings. Moreover, in the meditation related to the main topic of this step, while one breaths in and out, one imagines a loved one for whom one cares and recognizes feelings such as warmth, loving-kindness, empathy, and compassion flowing through one's mind as one meditates. While focusing on the feelings of the compassionate mind and heart toward the loved one, one repeats the following sentences: "May you be happy. May you be free from suffering. May you find peace and joy." Reciting these phrases in meditation continues the cultivation of a compassionate mind and heart.¹⁰⁵

In the third step, "Loving-Kindness and Compassion for Oneself," one moves from realizing positive feelings for a loved one to having them for oneself. This step is very important and is a prerequisite for loving-kindness and compassion for others. If one does not attain loving-kindness and compassion for oneself, one cannot have positive emotions for others. This step is divided across two weeks of courses. One week, Step 3a, focuses on compassion for oneself, and

¹⁰⁵ Thupten Jinpa, *Compassion Cultivation Training Program*, 14–25.

the other week, Step 3b, turns to loving-kindness for oneself.

In Step 3a, compassion for oneself, the instruction emphasizes the importance of self-acceptance and self-forgiveness and the formation of a compassionate image. Specifically, participants are told that they should eradicate negative self-judgments and self-criticism, dismantling through meditation their own negative perceptions as they differ from the reality of the authentic self. Furthermore, one can cultivate compassion for oneself through a compassionate image found through meditation and exercises. The compassionate image emerges from one's own experiences of receiving care, warmth, kindness, love, and compassion from others. Thus, in this step, one calls upon a compassionate image to take care of and care for one's own self.

In Step 3b, loving-kindness for oneself, students are taught that just as compassion is defined as desiring that others be free from suffering, loving-kindness is a wish for all sentient beings to be happy. Thus, this step focuses on having loving-kindness for oneself, which includes the following attributes: warmth, caring, tenderness, and connection. The instruction in this step discusses the importance of the difference between loving-kindness for oneself and egoistic self-love. The difference is that while egoistic self-love just focuses on one's own benefit and desires, not feeling others' suffering, loving-kindness for oneself is based on self-nurturing and self-soothing in order to become empathic toward others and participate in others' needs and feelings. In this step, the exercise is related to self-appreciation, confessing one's own presence and values with one's partners. In the meditation, one acknowledges aspirations and wishes for happiness and repeats the following sentences: "May I be happy. May I find peace and joy." Moreover, through breathing in and out, one can think of a compassionate friend for oneself and make oneself into such a compassionate friend, repeating the following sentences:

“From now on, I will be a true friend unto myself. I will show greater appreciation toward myself. I will be warm, friendly, and caring toward myself.”¹⁰⁶

The fourth step, establishing the basis for compassion toward others, is designed to help participants embrace our shared common humanity and develop appreciation of others as the ground for attaining compassion for others. Embracing our shared common humanity involves having a sense of the equality and basic sameness of oneself with others, recognizing that oneself, others, and even all sentient beings desire to overcome suffering and achieve happiness. Appreciation of others delineates the sense of interconnectedness that one exists in the presence of others and one and others are interdependent beings, thus eliminating linear dependency. These two kinds of awareness help one extend a compassionate heart and mind toward a loved one, toward oneself, and then toward a neutral person, someone who is not close to oneself. This step has the empathy exercise, which entails talking to one’s partners about one’s sorrows and suffering and listening to one’s partners’ difficulties and disappointments. The exercise enables one to feel empathy for others and to offer empathy to others. In this step, the meditation begins with settling the mind, moves to practicing loving-kindness and compassion for a loved one and for oneself, and then focuses on shared common aspirations for happiness and interconnection with and appreciation of others.

The fifth step, cultivating compassion toward others, is based on the two recognitions of Step 4: the basic sameness between oneself and others in terms of desire for happiness and interconnection with and appreciation of others. In this stage, the focus of the instruction is to recognize the authentic meanings of compassion for others. Thus, in the teachings, compassion does not involve a sense of pity or heroism that leads to feelings of personal distress or sacrifices that produce negative factors. Compassion’s authentic meanings include being open, sensitive,

¹⁰⁶ Thupten Jinpa, *Compassion Cultivation Training Program*, 26–40.

and responsive to the suffering of others, not through making negative personal sacrifices but motivated and voluntary self-sacrifices. Moreover, authentic compassion will not be different depending on whether it is for a loved one, oneself, a stranger, or a foe. In other words, compassion extends from the feeling of compassion for a loved one and oneself into compassion for strangers and even enemies, with the same basic feeling of compassion being present in all instances. In the meditation for this step, one begins with settling the mind and loving-kindness and compassion for a loved one, and then focuses on having compassion for a difficult person who has harmed one or with whom one has a conflict. Although one has negative feelings toward the difficult person, one meditates on the idea that the difficult person has the same desires for happiness and lack of suffering that everyone else has, and one repeats the following sentences, “May you be free from this suffering. May you experience peace and joy.” After one meditates on happiness and freedom from suffering for the difficult person, one refocuses on loving-kindness and compassion for oneself, repeating, “May I be free from suffering. May I experience peace and joy.” One also tries to meditate on compassion for a neutral person and compassion for all beings along with the feeling of compassion for oneself. In this stage, there are no discriminations or differences between compassion for a loved one, oneself, a neutral person, a difficult person, or non-human beings. The sense of basic equality and interdependence is affirmed through repeating the following sentences: “May all beings be free from suffering. May all beings experience peace and joy.”¹⁰⁷

The final step in the eight-week program, active compassion practice, strengthens the cultivation of compassion for others with the strong aspiration for them to overcome suffering and to achieve happiness. In this step, one actively participates in the suffering and needs of others—relieving their suffering and providing happiness and joy for them from an empathic and

¹⁰⁷ Thupten Jinpa, *Compassion Cultivation Training Program*, 49–58.

altruistic stance—rather than just wishing that others be free from suffering. This stage emphasizes tonglen practice, giving and taking, the Tibetan form of the active compassion practice. While one breathes out and in, one visualizes taking in the negativities of others, such as anger, anxiety, and worries, and sending out positive qualities, such as tenderness, warmth, and loving-kindness. With respect to compassion for others, one breathes in the suffering and pain of others and breathes out happiness and compassion for others through breathing-in-and-out exercises.¹⁰⁸ CCT's eight-week program is designed to integrate the meditation and exercises of the six steps into a daily compassion cultivation practice that people can apply in their daily lives. It concludes by reviewing the meditations and exercises of the six steps and encourages participants to practice the compassion cultivation training program in both formal and informal situations.

Compassionate Mind Training (CMT)

Theoretical Rationales of Compassionate Mind Training (CMT). Paul Gilbert, a professor at the University of Derby in the United Kingdom and director of the mental health research unit at Derbyshire Mental Health Trust, posits that human beings have two types of brains and minds: an old brain/mind and a new brain/mind.¹⁰⁹ For instance, when one faces threats and harm, the old brain and mind instantly responds to them with actions for protection, safety, and soothing using basic emotion regulation systems that do not require any reflection or awareness to be engaged. The old brain and mind has automatic and instant response tendencies when things occur. In particular, there are three basic emotion regulation systems in the old brain and mind: the threat and self-protection system, the incentive and resource-seeking system, and the

¹⁰⁸ Thupten Jinpa, *Compassion Cultivation Training Program*, 59–67.

¹⁰⁹ Gilbert, *Compassionate Mind*, 21–36.

soothing and contentment system.¹¹⁰

The threat and self-protection system is designed to pick up threats and respond to them for self-protection and safety. This system expresses the following feelings: anger, anxiety, disgust, aggression, flight, and depression. The incentive and resource-seeking system motivates us to pursue resources for our survival and flourishing. This system creates positive feelings, such as pleasure and excitement, when what we want and pursue is achieved. The soothing and contentment system controls negative emotions, such as anger, anxiety, aggression, and depression that were caused by the over-activity of the threat and self-protection system. This system calms down desires, wants, and a focus on seeking, pursuing, and achieving. Thus, this system aims to balance the two other systems, providing feelings of safety, contentment, and well-being.¹¹¹

The balancing of these three emotion regulation systems makes it possible for people to travel the road of compassion. In particular, the soothing and contentment system activates positive emotions, such as warmth, tenderness, and kindness for others. Thus, it seems that compassion emerges from the activation of the soothing and contentment system. In this respect, Gilbert asserts the importance of mind training to maintain the permanent activation of the soothing and contentment system and the balance of the three emotion systems. He encourages people to use the new brain and mind that have reflective, imaginative, and creative abilities for compassion, and he provides Compassionate Mind Training (CBT) as a model for training ourselves to have compassionate minds and hearts. Through the new brain and mind, we step back from primitive desires generated by the old brain and mind, reflect on them, and take control of them. Also, the new brain and mind leads us to empathize with and understand the

¹¹⁰ Gilbert, *Compassionate Mind*, 22–27.

¹¹¹ Gilbert, *Compassionate Mind*, 168–78.

feelings and suffering of others. It has the ability to imagine the suffering and feelings of others, recognize, and participate in them. In sum, the new brain and mind has various abilities, such as imagination, fantasy, reflection, self-awareness, rumination, and planning.¹¹²

The Practice of CMT. Gilbert understands that compassion contains various attributes, such as sensitivity toward distress and need, distress tolerance and acceptance, motivation, care for well-being, non-judgment, warmth, empathy, and sympathy.¹¹³ He explains that compassion emerges from the interaction of various elements, including attention, imagery/fantasy, feeling, thinking/reasoning, the senses, and behaviors. All of these elements are part of the human mind. When the human mind focuses on a threat, various elements obstruct compassion or compassionate attributes. When compassion is at the center of the mind, as in the figure below, it is called the compassionate mind. When we train our mind for compassion and compassionate attributes, this is called Compassionate Mind Training.

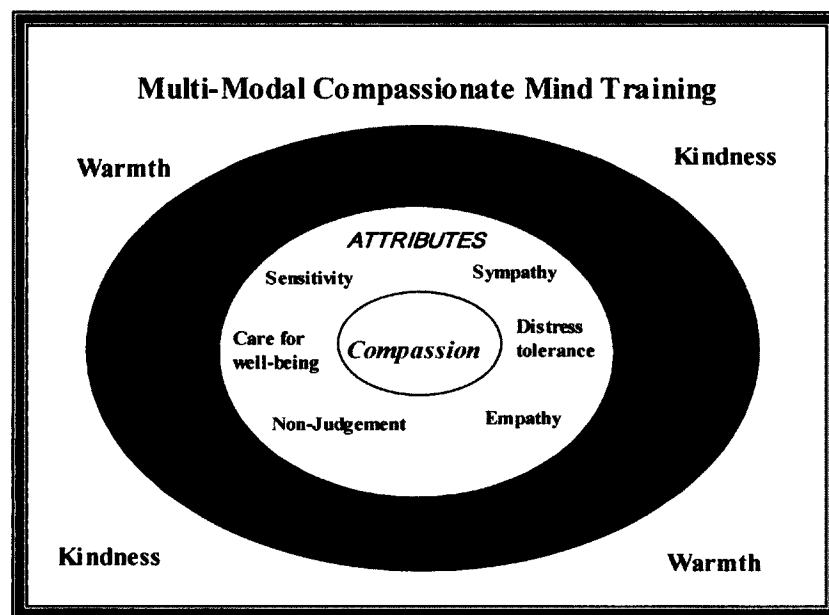


Figure 2. Multi-Modal Compassionate Mind Training¹¹⁴

¹¹² Gilbert, *Compassionate Mind*, 181–85.

¹¹³ Gilbert, *Compassionate Mind*, 194–207.

¹¹⁴ Gilbert, *Compassionate Mind*, 194.

Compassionate Mind Training (CMT) aims to generate a compassionate mind through the interaction of various compassionate skills, such as attention, imagery, feeling, touching, thinking, and other behaviors for which exercises and training are needed. CMT is largely divided into three areas to train for a compassionate mind: compassionate attention, compassionate reasoning and thinking, and compassionate behaviors. Compassionate imagery, feeling, and use of the senses go along with these three areas.

To develop the skill of compassionate attention, Gilbert describes training exercises for building mindful attention and a compassionate image. In terms of mindful attention, one becomes aware of what is happening to one without any judgment or evaluation. Mindfulness enables one to experience the present moment in one's consciousness and attentive awareness with a clarity of observation. The first exercise of mindful attention is mindful breathing and relaxing that is called a "soothing breathing rhythm." The most significant aspect of mindful breathing and relaxing is to naturally recognize the rhythm of breathing in and out. As we breathe in and out, we become aware of our breathing pattern. When we notice our breathing pattern and return our attention to it, we become relaxed. Through repeated mindful breathing and relaxing, we experience the soothing and calming down of our whole mind and body in the present moment. Thus, by recognizing a soothing breathing rhythm through mindful breathing and relaxing, we come to maintain the activation of the soothing and contentment system, which balances the threat and self-protection system and the incentive and resource-seeking system.¹¹⁵

Gilbert provides another exercise, building a compassionate image, as a means to train the mind in compassionate attention. This exercise is designed to develop a compassionate image for compassion toward oneself and others through emotional and sensory abilities. While one breathes in and out a little faster or a little slower, one engages in a soothing breathing rhythm.

¹¹⁵ Gilbert, *Compassionate Mind*, 221–41.

When this soothing breathing rhythm is natural, not compulsory, one allows an image to appear in one's mind. It can be more than one image as one exercises and chooses. The image(s) should contain four qualities in order to be compassionate: wisdom, strength, warmth, and non-judgment. In this exercise, one imagines compassionate images that include these four qualities through one's sensory imagination. While breathing in and out and recognizing the soothing breathing rhythm, allow the image to come into one's mind and observe the image's sensory details. For example, what does the image look like? Is it young or old, male or female, human or non-human? What colors is it? What is its hair style or what is it wearing? What does the image sound like? Note its tone of voice or rhythm. Other sensory qualities can be observed in this compassionate image exercise. Moreover, in this exercise, one can think about how one would like the compassionate image to relate to oneself and how one would like to relate to the compassionate image. Through imagining these sensory characteristics of the compassionate image, one can build one's own compassionate image for compassionate mind training. By practicing the exercise of building a compassionate image, we address a deep wish that we be free from suffering. This exercise begins with compassion for ourselves and extends to compassion for others through applying compassionate images, including wisdom, strength, warmth, and non-judgment, to others as well as oneself, wishing that oneself and others be free from suffering and be able to flourish.¹¹⁶

To develop compassionate reasoning and thinking, the exercises aim to train the mind to think and reason compassionately about oneself and others. The first exercise involves attending to and monitoring the mind about what is happening in the mind. The major point of this exercise is to pay attention to the thoughts arising from the mind and to observe how such thoughts affect one's emotions. While we breathe in and out with a natural rhythm, we ruminate on the thoughts

¹¹⁶ Gilbert, *Compassionate Mind*, 242–68.

and emotions emerging from our minds, such as anxiety, worry, and anger, standing back from them and reflecting on them. Thus, through this exercise, we become intimately familiar with our thoughts and can describe the characteristics and inclinations of our thoughts in detail.

The next exercise entails the interaction of the imagination with thinking or reasoning. Breathing in and out, one imagines that one stands or sits in a soothing place, and one imagines oneself as a compassionate person or a compassionate image that will take care of one's injured self or others, having a conversation with that compassionate image or self. One imagines the compassionate image or self talking with one with a warm voice and a smile about the characteristics and interpretations of our own thoughts and emotions, maintaining a soothing breathing rhythm. One lets oneself stay in the compassionate mode, feeling compassion for oneself and others. This exercise enables us to think and reason compassionately about our own or others' difficulties with a compassionate stance toward ourselves and others.¹¹⁷

A third exercise, which builds on the previous two, is compassionate letter writing. Compassionate letter writing enables one to pay attention to one's thoughts and emotions and to think and reason compassionately for oneself and others. In this exercise, one writes a compassionate letters about one's own or others' difficulties using the empathic stance of the compassionate self or compassionate image. First, engage in the soothing breathing rhythm. If one's mind is distracted, one needs to refocus on the soothing breathing rhythm until it is natural. Pick up a pen and piece of paper as one is engaged in the soothing breathing rhythm and visualize the compassionate image or self in one's mind. Begin writing a compassionate letter, imagining that one is writing with the compassionate image or self for a few moments. This leads to close contact with the compassionate self or image which then leads to thinking and reasoning compassionately. The process of writing a letter enables us to become more

¹¹⁷ Gilbert, *Compassionate Mind*, 269–308.

understanding and reflective of our thoughts, emotions, and difficulties without any judgment or evaluation. In the final step, we can write down our action list for compassion that we can practice in our daily lives.¹¹⁸

In terms of developing compassionate behaviors, if we engage our thoughts and emotions with the compassionate self or image as in the previous step, we focus on the cultivation of compassionate behaviors. One of the most important elements in compassionate behaviors is courage that is not only an automatic reaction but a choice for relieving our own or another's suffering.¹¹⁹ The different kinds of courage in compassionate behaviors include resistance to our own desires, wants, and automatic, reflexive emotions. Thus, compassion emerges from resistance to our own drive systems.¹²⁰ Another element of compassionate behaviors is to be sensitive and responsive to others' feelings and suffering. Sensitivity and responsibility enable us to have a deep wish that we and others will be free from suffering and achieve happiness and flourishing. In this step, we write a compassionate letter related to compassionate behaviors and make a commitment to engage in compassionate behaviors for ourselves and others.¹²¹

Active Imagination for Cultivating Compassion

Definition and Understanding of Active Imagination. Active Imagination was developed by Carl Gustav Jung as a means for encounter between the conscious mind and the unconscious and as a way to approach the psyche.¹²² Active Imagination enables us to discover different parts of ourselves that exist in the unconscious and to bring them to consciousness and connect with them. Robert Johnson, author of *Inner Work*, explains that the purpose of Active

¹¹⁸ Gilbert, *Compassionate Mind*, 347–56.

¹¹⁹ Gilbert, *Compassionate Mind*, 363–64.

¹²⁰ Gilbert, *Compassionate Mind*, 389–91.

¹²¹ Gilbert, *Compassionate Mind*, 394–96, 422.

¹²² C. G Jung, *Jung on Active Imagination*, ed. Joan Chodorow, Encountering Jung (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 1–3.

Imagination is “communication between the ego and the parts of the unconscious that we are usually cut off from.”¹²³ In Active Imagination, we allow ourselves to feel powerful emotions that cause us to suffer. The emotions emerge from the unconscious and can be understood as messages of the unconscious. Then we personify these emotional messages of the unconscious by giving them images or forms while we are awake and conscious.¹²⁴ The images or forms signify inner parts of ourselves hidden beneath the conscious mind. In the processes of Active Imagination, we approach the images as internal parts that have their own beliefs, thoughts, and emotions by listening, talking, arguing, fighting, and making friends with them.¹²⁵ In other words, we experience everything that happens in the unconscious consciously through imagination. An important aspect of Active Imagination is that we discover different views from parts of us that exist in the unconscious, as opposed to the perspectives of the conscious mind. Extreme conflicts and confrontations between the conscious mind and the unconscious cause neurotic imbalances and emotional dysfunctions that cause us to suffer. Thus, Active Imagination helps us to bring about an interaction between the conscious mind and inner parts to solve problems like neurotic imbalances caused by gaps between the perspectives of the conscious mind and those of the unconscious. As the conscious and the unconscious interact, a balancing and synthesis toward wholeness takes place.¹²⁶ To outline the process of Active Imagination, we first open the unconscious to allow any images to come to consciousness; next, we dialogue with them through imagination; and finally, we use our self-reflective and conscious minds to apply the insights and meanings gained from the unconscious to our daily lives.¹²⁷ In

¹²³ Robert A. Johnson, *Inner Work: Using Dreams and Active Imagination for Personal Growth* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986), 142.

¹²⁴ Jung, *Jung on Active Imagination*, 2.

¹²⁵ Barbara Hannah, *Encounters with the Soul: Active Imagination as Developed by C.G. Jung* (Santa Monica, CA: Sigo Press, 1981), 17.

¹²⁶ Johnson, *Inner Work*, 138–42.

¹²⁷ Jung, *Jung on Active Imagination*, 2.

sum, in Active Imagination, we participate in the unconscious and inner world through the conscious mind by recognizing the whole self or entirety of the self, including the conscious and unconscious.

Practical Example of Active Imagination. According to Joan Chodorow, a Jungian analyst, Jung presents two stages for Active Imagination. The first stage is “letting the unconscious come up,” and the second is “coming to terms with the unconscious.”¹²⁸ In the first stage, we begin by eliminating all thoughts and emotions that dominate our consciousness and even judgmental attention. Our consciousness should become like a vacuum. Then we let the unconscious bring up any images or forms through active imagination. As the unconscious is activated in this stage, the conscious ego becomes an inner witness and observer to receive the messages from the unconscious. In the second stage Jung provides, dialogue and encounter with the images of the unconsciousness provide our conscious minds with meanings and insights. Then the conscious ego takes the lead by integrating the insights of this process into the person’s current everyday life.

Many Jungians further develop the two stages of Jung’s Active Imagination and subdivide it into four or five stages. Marie-Louise von Franz provides the following procedure: “1) Empty the ‘mad mind’ of the ego; 2) Let an unconscious fantasy image arise; 3) Give it some form of expression; 4) Ethical confrontation; and 5) Apply it to ordinary life.” Janet Dallett offers four stages: (1) opening to the unconscious; (2) giving it form; (3) reaction by the ego; and (4) living it.¹²⁹

Since I find most helpful the four stages of Active Imagination that Robert Johnson presents, I will describe them in detail. The four steps are:

¹²⁸ Jung, *Jung on Active Imagination*, 10.

¹²⁹ Jung, *Jung on Active Imagination*, 11.

1. Invite the unconscious[.]
2. Dialogue and experience
3. Add the ethical element of values.
4. Make it concrete with physical ritual.¹³⁰

As we practice the four steps of Active Imagination, we need physical modes for recording the activities of the imagination, like dialogue with inner figures, so we do not fall into passive fantasy or wander around in daydreams. The most effective way to record imaginative dialogues with inner parts is writing. This helps us to focus our conscious mind on what happens in the inner world and in our conversations with the images that arise.¹³¹ However, the physical method of recording is not limited to writing; active imaginings can be expressed through many different forms, such as dancing, drawing, painting, and playing music.¹³²

The first step of Active Imagination is an invitation to the unconscious in which we invite inner parts with personified images to rise up in the conscious mind. Inviting the unconscious necessitates blocking the mind from the outside world. Therefore, before we begin the practice of Active Imagination, we secure a quiet and comfortable room where we will not be interrupted by the external world, and we clear our conscious mind from distractions. Then we focus on the imagination, simply observing what comes up in the inner world in order to dialogue with the images that arise. Thus, this step entails just inviting inner parts to show up, rather than us trying to manipulate and control them. It requires us to have patience and to concentrate until some image comes up in the conscious mind; we must remain present without any judgment or prejudice toward the images of the unconscious.¹³³

Practical methods for invitation of the unconscious include using fantasies, visiting

¹³⁰ Johnson, *Inner Work*, 160.

¹³¹ Johnson, *Inner Work*, 160–64.

¹³² Jung, *Jung on Active Imagination*, 4.

¹³³ Johnson, *Inner Work*, 165–68.

symbolic places, using personifications, and dialoguing with dream figures.¹³⁴ To use fantasies means changing passive fantasies or daydreams into Active Imagination. In passive fantasies, we just watch the flow of the fantasy without self-reflection on or active participation in what is happening within us. Although some images from the unconscious appear, we do not engage them with our consciousness in order to interact with them. However, when we consider the flow of fantasies as a starting point and participate in them with our consciousness by choosing a visual image from the unconscious and dialoging with it, the passive fantasies are converted into Active Imagination. Thus, using fantasies is a way of inviting the unconscious when no images come up for Active Imagination. A second way of inviting the unconscious is to visit a symbolic place in the imagination. We imagine going to a place where we seek images that are inner parts of ourselves. When we find them, we interact with them by talking and listening to them. The third way of invitation is to use personifications. When we are caught up in negative emotions and thoughts, we personify them to start a dialogue with the unconscious and to solve inner imbalances. The final way for inviting the unconscious is to dialogue with dream figures. This helps us to extend a dream into Active Imagination by consciously dialoguing with inner figures whom we have encountered in a dream.

The second step of Active Imagination is about the dialogue. Through the invitation of the unconscious, images as inner parts come up, and then we begin to dialogue with them in the imagination. The most important thing in this step is to listen to the inner figures, to what they would like to say and what they want, and to write down in detail what happens within us. Writing down the inner dialogue helps us to more fully concentrate on the inner world and its images without falling into passive fantasies. The practical suggestions for dialoguing with inner parts in this step involve conversing with one image, participating with your feelings, listening,

¹³⁴ Johnson, *Inner Work*, 168–72.

replying, and not manipulating. We engage one image by dialoging with it until we achieve an authentic relationship with it, without distracting our focus toward other images. We participate in the feelings occurring internally in the dialogue by actively attending to them and listening and responding to them. One of the most important principles for inner dialogue is not to manipulate and control the unconscious to make the unconscious follows the ego's ideas and perspectives. The unconscious images have their own beliefs, thoughts, emotions, and intentions to protect us from harm. Therefore, we listen to our inner parts and why they act as they do and what they want in the dialogue.¹³⁵

The third step is about determining the values that will set the boundaries of the process of Active Imagination. This step requires us to exercise an ethical stance with the conscious mind. When we are involved in imaginative processes with inner parts, instinctual destructive desires sometimes arise. Then the conscious ego should apply its values and beliefs to check the workings of the imagination. Johnson emphasizes three principles for maintaining an ethical stance in Active Imagination.¹³⁶ The first is that our attitudes and behaviors should be in accord with our inner character and deepest values as we engage in Active Imagination. One of the most essential principles of ethics is consistency in conforming our behaviors to our values. The second principle is that we should maintain an ethical balance so that one inner part does not take over and supplant true and essential values. The third principle is to keep human values involved in the processes of Active Imagination in order to enrich human life and relationships with other people. In sum, this step enables us to encounter inner parts grounded in a conscious ethical stance that seeks the best values in human life.

The fourth step of Active Imagination is rituals that give physical form to the messages

¹³⁵ Johnson, *Inner Work*, 179–88.

¹³⁶ Johnson, *Inner Work*, 192.

from the unconscious. In other words, the rituals are meant to incarnate our Active Imagination. This step is about converting inner, imaginative, and symbolic experiences into practical, physical, and conscious forms in our lives. The major premise of performing physical rituals is that we need to make concrete and integrate into our daily lives the messages, meanings, and insights that have been derived from inner and imaginative experiences.¹³⁷ The rituals of Active Imagination are symbolic acts that affirm the meanings and messages that have come from inner images. For instance, if our unconscious gives us the message that we are worried about the future too much, a ritual might be to release the worries of our consciousness by throwing a flower into a river as a symbol act of letting go. If our inner parts tell us that we are mentally and physically exhausted, we perform a ritual such as getting rest, taking a walk, or sleeping more. Symbolic and small acts such as these rituals serve the roles of making the messages of the inner parts concrete and of integrating them into practical, everyday life. The most important thing to remember with rituals is that their purpose is to take the messages from the unconscious and express them consciously and physically. Moreover, the power of ritual on the conscious mind causes us to transfer the recognition of the meanings and messages back into the unconscious, where we can be healed and released from our suffering or psychological imbalances and find new energy to take into our lives.¹³⁸

However, in engaging in rituals of Active Imagination, we must be careful to avoid “acting out,” that is, “taking our inner, subjective conflicts and urges and trying to live them out externally and physically.”¹³⁹ In other words, we do not want to allow our behaviors and feelings from the inner world of imagination to be acted out in the real world. For example, when we fight inner figures in Active Imagination, we should not then fight with someone in the real

¹³⁷ Johnson, *Inner Work*, 196–97.

¹³⁸ Johnson, *Inner Work*, 97–104.

¹³⁹ Johnson, *Inner Work*, 196.

world. We should not act out imaginative fantasies with inner parts in our real lives in literal ways. In addition, when we invite the unconscious and some images arise, we should not use images of living people familiar to us, such as friends, spouses, or coworkers.¹⁴⁰ This is because we can easily become confused between the imaginative world and practical relationships with others. Thus, the practice of Active Imagination requires common sense and an ethical stance for true engagement with the imagination.

Internal Family Systems (IFS)

The Definition and Understanding of Internal Family Systems. The Internal Family Systems model was developed by Psychologist Richard C. Schwartz. It directs us to concentrate on our inner experiences and voices, including thoughts, emotions, images, and sensations happening within our inner world.¹⁴¹ First of all, the IFS model helps a person to realize the presence of many parts on the inside, to recognize that multiple parts interact with various thoughts and emotions, and to access the authentic Self. Moreover, it challenges him or her to stay in the Self and to form Self-leadership, in which the Self guides the many parts through healing the vulnerable parts and unburdening the burdens of the extreme roles of parts.¹⁴² This approach is closely related to compassion for freedom from suffering.

The Goals of Internal Family Systems (IFS). The first ultimate goal of IFS is to alleviate parts with the extreme role of protecting us from internal suffering and external threats. Then IFS helps transform the parts with extreme roles into parts with good roles and positive intentions. The second goal of IFS is to help the Self form Self-leadership through the process of gaining all parts' trust, to maintain the balance of the many parts with positive and appropriate roles

¹⁴⁰ Hannah, *Encounters with the Soul*, 12.

¹⁴¹ Richard C Schwartz, *Introduction to the Internal Family Systems Model* (Oak Park, IL: Trailheads, 2001), 2.

¹⁴² Jay Earley, *Self-Therapy: A Step-by-Step Guide to Creating Inner Wholeness Using IFS, A New, Cutting Edge Psychotherapy* (Minneapolis, MN: Mill City Press, 2009), 4–5.

according to situations, and to gain the collaboration of all parts with each other.¹⁴³

Inclusive Understanding of Parts. To completely understand the IFS model, we need to examine the concept of “parts” in the inner life and the Self. Human beings have diverse patterns of thought and emotions and a complex system in which the parts interact with each other and the Self according to their environment and situation. For instance, we sometimes experience irrational feelings such as rage, fear, and frustration when facing threats or harm from someone else. We also have feelings of worry and anxiety when facing an important event. Seeing a caring child or those who are suffering, compassionate and empathic feelings form inside us. We have realized that we have a variety of different thoughts and emotions according to the situations in our inner lives. Schwartz believes that these emotions and thoughts emerge from inner personalities, called “parts.”¹⁴⁴ In other words, many parts with personalities exist within our inner world. Schwartz emphasizes the “multiplicity of the mind” as the ground for the existence of diverse parts within us.¹⁴⁵ For this concept, he draws on the work of psychiatrist Robert Assagioli and psychoanalyst Carl Gustav Jung. Assagioli recognized that human beings have diverse patterns of thoughts and emotions with subpersonalities inside us, and he defined these phenomena as psychosynthes.¹⁴⁶ Jung was aware of a multiplicity of thoughts and emotions within persons, and he developed an approach called “Active Imagination” in order to access these inner parts.¹⁴⁷

In IFS, the parts are called, “subpersonalities, subelves, internal characters, archetypes, complexes, internal objects, ego states, or voices.”¹⁴⁸ The parts have their own feelings, beliefs,

¹⁴³ Schwartz, *Introduction to the Internal Family Systems Model*, 139. Earley, *Self-Therapy*, 29.

¹⁴⁴ Schwartz, *Introduction to the Internal Family Systems Model*, 9.

¹⁴⁵ Richard C Schwartz, *Internal Family Systems Therapy*, Guilford Family Therapy Series (New York: Guilford Press, 1995), 11–17.

¹⁴⁶ Schwartz, *Internal Family Systems Therapy*, 12.

¹⁴⁷ Schwartz, *Introduction to the Internal Family Systems Model*, 71.

¹⁴⁸ Schwartz, *Internal Family Systems Therapy*, 34.

memories, and motivations to protect us from harm or pain in the inner life.¹⁴⁹ Certain parts among the many parts can be activated in particular situations or times and are accompanied by certain feelings, thoughts, behaviors, physical reactions, memories, and motivations. The most important idea is that all parts have their own roles and positive intent to protect us from harm and pain, to deal with difficulties, and to secure happiness and safety. However, when any part takes over a person in an extreme role through an automatic and instant reaction to just protect that person from pain, the extreme role of the part triggers dysfunction and trouble in the person's internal and external life, causing a loss of the leadership of the Self and a breaking of the balance of interaction among all the parts. Thus, psychotherapist Jay Earley explains that "it can cause you to have distorted perceptions, inaccurate beliefs, or obsessive thought patterns. It can flood you with pain or body tension."¹⁵⁰ These phenomena can be understood as suffering in the aspect of compassion. They affect our minds, bodies, and behaviors through compulsive feelings, obsessive thoughts, impulsive and automatic behaviors, skewed motivations, and so on. Thus, in this view, the IFS model aims to help people get to know the extreme roles of parts, heal these parts, and transform them into having good part roles functioning under the guidance of the Self and the balance of interaction with all other parts.

Three Types of Parts: Exiles, Managers, and Firefighters. Schwartz explains that all parts can be divided into three groups according to their roles: exiles, which are protected parts, and managers and firefighters, which are protectors.¹⁵¹ Earley elucidates that there are, in general, just two kinds of parts: exiles and protectors. Thus, he places Schwartz's roles of manager and firefighter under the category of protectors.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁹ Earley, *Self-Therapy*, 5.

¹⁵⁰ Earley, *Self-Therapy*, 18.

¹⁵¹ Schwartz, *Introduction to the Internal Family Systems Model*, 90.

¹⁵² Earley, *Self-Therapy*, 19.

If the protectors are parts that protect us or exiles from pain and hurt, exiles are young and vulnerable parts that have experienced hurt and pain through events of the past. In particular, exiles are caught within a particular time in childhood when they were hurt, humiliated, or abused. The exiles emerge from the incidents, exist in our lives, and cause us to be frustrated or frozen whenever the same or similar events happen. Schwartz views the original parts of the exiles as “our most sensitive, innocent, open, and intimacy-seeking parts, which contain qualities such as liveliness, playfulness, spontaneity, creativity, and joie de vivre.”¹⁵³ Thus, it is very easy for these original parts to become exiles due to dreadful pain or trauma, because they are vulnerable and sensitive to the effects of pain. Exiles develop their own emotions, memories, and sensations as a result of painful emotions such as loneliness, abandonment, abuse, betrayal, despair, fear, and powerlessness, and they cause us to have distorted beliefs of worthlessness and uselessness.¹⁵⁴ Since exiles carry these dreadful feelings and negative beliefs from the past, they are locked away and exiled into the world of unconsciousness by the protectors trying to keep us from pain and trauma.¹⁵⁵ For instance, when a person experiences a dreadful incident like sexual abuse, he or she tries to forget this event and exile the wounded part into unconsciousness. Thus, exiles are naturally isolated from the inner family system. However, since we make sure that exiles remain in our inner lives as wounded parts, they affect thoughts, emotions, beliefs, memories, and sensations.

Protectors aim to keep exiles and us from pain and hurt and secure safety. They play a variety of roles, such as distracter, critic, judge, worrier, and manager, in order to achieve protection. While exiles are stuck in painful incidents of the past, protectors are concerned about

¹⁵³ Schwartz, *Introduction to the Internal Family Systems Model*, 90.

¹⁵⁴ Earley, *Self-Therapy*, 23.

¹⁵⁵ Tom Holmes, *Parts Work: An Illustrated Guide to Your Inner Life* (Kalamazoo, MI: Winged Heart Press, 2007), 88–89.

current events and relationships that may cause pain and trauma. But although protectors are trying to control everything in order to protect us from pain in our current lives, they are closely connected with painful and dreadful events in the past. In other words, protectors cannot be free from the past and are affected by painful events and relationships experienced in childhood. They mistakenly think that they are in childhood and have not matured to deal with difficulties and problems.¹⁵⁶ Thus, protectors play extreme roles to keep us from feeling pain and hurt and to lock exiles in the world of unconsciousness.

Schwartz distinguishes between two kinds of protectors: managers and firefighters.¹⁵⁷ Managers are a kind of protector that seeks to secure safety and protection from pain and suffering. They intend to control our situations, environments, and relationships so we are not insulted, denied, abandoned, or hurt.¹⁵⁸ Therefore, managers observe our all behaviors relating to relationships with others, personate being invulnerable and perfect, and provide an interpretative view to approach and understand the world for the purpose of protection. Thus, managers have their own perspectives, beliefs, motivations, and stories about the self. These are called “self-identity.” It is important to understand that the beliefs and stories of managers are internalized along with current cultural values and perspectives. Even though the managers are trying to protect the exiles and us from pain and hurt, they criticize the exiles and us for being vulnerable, weak, and protected. This leads the managers to feel over-burdened with protecting the exiles and us, to lock the exiles in the world of the unconsciousness even more, and to lose the guidance of Self-leadership. Thus, managers have the extreme role of protecting us from feeling pain and hurt.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁶ Earley, *Self-Therapy*, 19.

¹⁵⁷ Schwartz, *Introduction to the Internal Family Systems Model*, 103–18.

¹⁵⁸ Schwartz, *Internal Family Systems Therapy*, 48–50.

¹⁵⁹ Schwartz, *Introduction to the Internal Family Systems Model*, 103–14.

While managers have proactive characters that monitor and control our actions, environments, and relationships to secure protection and safety in advance of trouble, firefighters as the other kind of protectors act reactively, protecting us from trauma and pain when the exiles are activated. Firefighters try to calm down exiles and distract us from the feelings and thoughts caused by activated exiles.¹⁶⁰ Thus, the protective behaviors of firefighters include “addictions (sleep, shopping, work, sex, diet, exercise, computer, video games, and more), binge eating, suicidality, self-harm, violence, dissociation, distraction, obsession, compulsion, fantasy, and rage.”¹⁶¹ In fact, firefighters have the extreme and destructive characters and roles to make us violent, addicted, sick, distracted, compulsive, and apathetic. In other words, they also cause us to lose the guidance and presence of the Self and the balance of interacting with other parts. Nonetheless, we make sure that firefighters protect us from being overwhelmed by exiles that bring up pain and suffering. Thus, protectors like firefighters need to be released from unhelpful and extreme roles.

The Self and Self-Leadership. In the IFS model, in order to liberate the extreme roles of parts, such as exiles and protectors, and to be free from suffering within us, we should bring the Self into the seat of consciousness and direct the Self to form a Self-leadership in which all parts trust the Self and interact with each other. The Self is not an aggregation of all the parts but an important core that can work to heal and transform our parts and to liberate us from suffering. The Self that observes all parts can be called the “observing ego” in ego psychology and “witness” or “mindfulness” in Buddhism.¹⁶² Thus, the Self has the capacity to heal the wounded, exiled parts within us, to calm the extreme roles of protector parts, and to transform their extreme roles into positive roles. In this respect, when we are in the Self, the extreme roles of parts cannot

¹⁶⁰ Schwartz, *Introduction to the Internal Family Systems Model*, 116.

¹⁶¹ Earley, *Self-Therapy*, 142.

¹⁶² Holmes, *Parts Work*, 17.

take over and we can be fully centered and embodied in the present moment under the guidance of the Self.¹⁶³ Earley delineates the four qualities of the Self and emphasizes that when we are in the Self, we can embody them: calmness, curiosity, compassion, and connection.¹⁶⁴ The Self has the quality of calmness because any extreme roles of parts are not activated in the consciousness and all parts interact with each other under the guidance of the Self. It observes what happens within us and guides us into the calmness of the Self. The Self has the character of clarity that understands the current situation without any distorted beliefs or obsessed feelings. The curiosity of the Self is at the heart of the IFS model and enables us to be open and non-judgmental as we exercise wonder and interest toward the inner voices of all the parts and others. Curiosity naturally leads the Self to have compassion that enables us to feel the pain of exiles as wounded parts, to embrace worry and the work of the protectors, and to engage in work to relieve the Self of other through participating in the suffering of others. Finally, when we are in the Self, we feel that the Self is closely connected with all parts, integrating the Self with inner parts as well as the Selves of other peoples around us.

The reason we pay attention to IFS in connection to compassion is that human beings' sufferings begin when certain parts extremely take over rather than the Self being centered and grounded in consciousness. When we are in the true Self, we can embody qualities of the Self, such as compassion, calmness, connection, and curiosity toward all parts, including exiles and protectors, and toward others with a compassionate heart.

Practical Exercises of Internal Family Systems. Schwartz provides practical exercises of IFS based on three aspects: the internal family systems, parts, and the Self. The first exercise

¹⁶³ Earley, *Self-Therapy*, 26.

¹⁶⁴ Earley, *Self-Therapy*, 27. Schwartz explains that the Self has many qualities, called the eight Cs of Self-leadership: calmness, clarity, curiosity, compassion, confidence, courage, creativity, and connectedness. Schwartz, *Introduction to the Internal Family Systems Model*, 33–48.

focuses on awareness of inner family relationships in IFS. The most important thing in this exercise is to recognize that different emotions, thought patterns, beliefs, motivations, and inner voices are interrelated within us. Imagine that we choose an emotion or thought pattern like anxiety and reflect how we are related with it, how emotions happens within us, how we act, how we are exiled from it, and how it influences our emotions, thought patterns, beliefs, motivations, inner voice, and even our lives. In this respect, the exercise invites us to approach the emotions or thought patterns that get activated within us with curiosity and openness without any criticism, judgment, or evaluation.¹⁶⁵

The second exercise is about getting to know a part. After we choose an emotion or thought pattern or inner voice as a part, we notice how we feel, how our body reacts toward that part of us. After we step back from the parts, we try to get to know them and ask them why they get activated and how they feel in consciousness. This exercise naturally leads the parts to trust us under the guidance of the Self.¹⁶⁶ The third exercise is designed to foster seeing from the Self. Suppose there is a person who hurts and insults us in a room. Imagine it is as if we see him or her from outside the room through a window. When we see the person who hurt us, we become aware of how we feel toward the person. If we feel angry, frustrated, detached, and infuriated, we turn our attention away, so as not to be obsessed with our emotions and thoughts, and we ask the emotion and thought parts to be separate from us. After asking them to separate from us, we feel that we are free from them and step back. If we do not feel free, then we repeat the exercise again to separate them from us. If emotions and thoughts as parts are separated from us, we sense that the Self comes out into consciousness with curiosity, compassion, connection, and calmness. We begin to be curious about why the hurtful person acted as he or she did and to see and

¹⁶⁵ Schwartz, *Introduction to the Internal Family Systems Model*, 15–18.

¹⁶⁶ Schwartz, *Introduction to the Internal Family Systems Model*, 87.

understand his or her behaviors from his or her perspective. And then we are compassionate about the suffering he or she has experienced and recognize in the calmness of the Self that we are interdependent beings. If different emotions and thoughts that are not qualities of the Self emerge in us, we try to separate them from us. In other words, this exercise leads us to separate parts like emotions or thought patterns from us and to recognize inner voices and other people through the lenses of the qualities of the Self: curiosity, compassion, connection, and calmness.¹⁶⁷

While Schwartz describes three kinds of exercises to become aware of inner family relationships, parts, and the Self, Earley has developed Schwartz's exercises and organized the practical exercises of IFS into a systematic process. Earley emphasizes the unburdening and healing of exiles and protectors through getting to know them and separating them under the guidance of the Self. From the perspective of compassion, these procedures enable us to free ourselves from suffering caused by extreme activations of the exiles and protectors. Moreover, they lead us to understand why others act as they do and to seek to liberate others from their exiles and protectors through the process of healing through the guidance of the Self. Within Earley's system, there are eight steps for healing the exiles hidden behind the protectors and to transform the extreme roles of the protectors into parts with the positive qualities of healthy roles under the guidance of the Self.

The first step is about *getting to know a protector*. Through this step, we access diverse protectors that are activated within us and discover the positive roles of the protectors in cooperation with the Self through detaching from the protectors. This naturally leads to a trusting relationship with the protectors. In this step, there are five stages, from P1 to P5, with the "P"

¹⁶⁷ Schwartz, *Introduction to the Internal Family Systems Model*, 49–50.

standing for “protector.”¹⁶⁸ P1 is about *accessing parts* in order to get to know the parts. When the protectors are activated, we just sense feelings and body sensations and listen to voices and their desires. Moreover, we become aware of their thoughts and beliefs and notice internal images corresponding to the parts. It is as if we shine our protectors with a flashlight of consciousness in order to access them.¹⁶⁹ P2, *unblending from the target part*, and P3, *unblending from the concerned part*, are designed to separate the parts or protectors from us. In P2, we need to check whether we are caught in feelings and thoughts from the target part or not. If we are stuck in them, we are blended with the target part that pushes the Self out and takes over in the seat of consciousness. Unless we are in the Self and the parts also are separate, we cannot know the protectors. Thus, in order to get to know the parts, we should be in the Self and the parts should be separate. Thus, there are some ways for unblending from the part: asking the part to separate, moving into Self to separate from the part, visualizing the part as separate, Self-meditation to cause the Self to pop up in the seat of consciousness, and finding an opposed part that has a conflict with the target part.¹⁷⁰

With respect to P3, *unblending from the concerned part*, we need to check whether we are in the Self and can get to know the protectors or not. Thus, we examine how we feel toward the target part in the present moment and what our attitudes are toward the part. If we feel calm, curious, connected, and compassionate, we are in the Self and go to the next stage. But when we feel angry, frustrated, distracted, and judged, we are blended with a concerned part that has negative feelings toward a target part and is worried about the problems the target parts brings. To unblend from the concerned part, we should ask the concerned part to step aside with a compassionate and open view. If the concerned part steps aside, we need to check again how we

¹⁶⁸ Earley, *Self-Therapy*, 49–50.

¹⁶⁹ Earley, *Self-Therapy*, 51–67.

¹⁷⁰ Earley, *Self-Therapy*, 82–84.

feel toward the target part. If the concerned part does not stand down, there are some options for unblending from it: explaining to it the value of stepping aside, reassuring the concerned part that what it is worried about will not occur, and changing the concerned part that has fear and will not be set aside into the target part to get to know.¹⁷¹

Stage P4 is about *discovering a protector's role*. Through this stage, we encourage the protector to tell us about itself and notice the feelings, thoughts, concerns, body sensations, and internal images and voices corresponding to the protector. In the process of getting to know a protector, we recognize its roles and fears and are invited to understand its positive intentions and goal with a compassionate, open, and acceptant attitude. This stage naturally leads to the stage of P5, *developing a trusting relationship with the protector*, the last stage of getting to know a protector. This stage focuses on developing a relationship with the protector and enables the protector to trust the Self. The practical way for enhancing a trusting relationship is that we come to understand its roles and why it performs as it does and to appreciate its endless efforts and work to protect us from pain and hurt. This allows the protector to relax, to feel connected with the Self and other parts, to trust the Self, and to permit us to access the exile that is the wounded part.¹⁷²

The second step is about *getting permission to work with an exile*. After getting to know protectors and before getting to know exiles, the most important task is to achieve permission from the protector to access and get to know the exile. The ultimate goal of protectors is to protect the exiles in pain and us from the pain of the exiles. If we are in the Self and the protector trusts the Self, we can ask the protector to show us the exile and then request the protector's approval to get to know the exile. If the protector does not permit access to the exile, we need to

¹⁷¹ Earley, *Self-Therapy*, 90–100.

¹⁷² Earley, *Self-Therapy*, 131–55.

notice what the protector is afraid and reassure it, explaining that the exile will not be harmed and will be free from extreme pain in the Self that deals with pain, and the protector will not be eliminated but discover new roles.¹⁷³

The third step focuses on getting to know an exile after getting permission from the protector. In this step, there are five stages, E1 to E5, in which “E” signifies “exile” for getting to know the exile. This step is very similar to the first step, “getting to know the protector.” The stages are E1, *accessing an exile*; E2, *unblending from the exile*; E3, *unblending from a concerned part*; E4, *learning about the exile*; and E5, *developing a trusting relationship with the exile*.¹⁷⁴ Through getting to know the exile and having the exile trust the Self, we can go to the next step.

In the fourth step, *accessing and witnessing childhood memories*, we access the childhood memories of an exile that bring up a burden as a painful feeling and negative thought, such as worthlessness, fear, humiliation, or abandonment, in one’s current life. In order to release the exile from pain and its burden, we first need to access where the burden and pain of the exile emerge from. Thus, we encourage the exile to show an image or memory about what happened and how it felt and acted in childhood. If we witness the painful and dreadful memory or image of the exile, we need to care for it with compassion and a sense of connectedness. Accessing and witnessing the childhood origin of the exile begins the procedure of healing for the exile and invites the exile to relieve itself of its burden.¹⁷⁵

The fifth step, *reparenting an exile*, is designed to create a new experience through reparenting of the exile as an inner child to heal the original pain the exile experienced. The practical exercise is to choose a memory of childhood origin through the imagination and to

¹⁷³ Earley, *Self-Therapy*, 178-95.

¹⁷⁴ Earley, *Self-Therapy*, 196-215.

¹⁷⁵ Earley, *Self-Therapy*, 216-33.

bring the Self into the original childhood situation with the qualities of the Self (compassion, connectedness, curiosity, and calmness). After we ask the exile and listen to what it needs, we provide everything the exile wants through inner imagination, thus reparenting the exile. This step enables us to replace the original painful experience with a new compassionate one and leads us to the next step.¹⁷⁶

The sixth step is about *retrieving an exile*. In fact, what the exile wants the most is to be free from its pain and burden. This means retrieving an exile from the original pain of childhood. Thus, the practical exercise is to bring the exile into a compassionate and hospitable place and environment in the current life with the Self, so it is no longer obsessed with the childhood situation that causes pain. This step emphasizes that the exile exists not in the past but in the present. Although the exile is worried about going back again to the original painful situation, the Self reassures the exile that it will not go back to the painful place of the past but will stay with the Self in the current reality.¹⁷⁷

Reparenting and retrieving the exile do not fully heal and transform the exile. They just help the Self to have a relationship with the exile before completing its healing and transformation. The seventh step for complete healing of the exile is *unburdening the exile*. In this step, the burden and pain of the exile can be completely released (the goal of IFS) through an internal ritual that liberates the exile from negative emotions and beliefs. With this ritual, we first name the burden of the exile and how the exile's burden is carried in and on the body, as in physical problems. Then we ask the exile if it wants to free from its burden. If the exile wants to be liberated, we engage in an internal ritual of release, imagining a symbolic action that frees the exile of its burden: "the burden can be released to light, washed away by water, blown away by

¹⁷⁶ Earley, *Self-Therapy*, 234–42.

¹⁷⁷ Earley, *Self-Therapy*, 242–48.

wind, put in the earth, burned up in fire, or anything else that feels right.”¹⁷⁸ Through this internal ritual to complete the healing and transformation of the exile, the burden of the exile from its painful childhood memory is released, and we discover who the exile truly is in its transformed state. Moreover, it is natural that positive qualities of the Self arise in the exile.

If the exile is released from its burden and pain and transformed, the protector that has protected it from pain can naturally be released from its extreme role and be transformed into having a new role. This is accomplished through the eighth step of *unburdening a protector*. While the burden of exile is pain, the protector has the burden of serving in a protective role for the exile in pain. When the exile is relieved from its burden, the protector no longer needs to guard the exile and is liberated from its burdens. Thus, the protector should recognize that the exile is free from pain and be transformed to have positive qualities. The freeing of the exile enables the protector to be released from the burden of the protective role, to be transformed with positive qualities such as clarity, strength, or love, and to find a new role. Complete healing and transformation of the exile and the protector lead to integration of all parts with the Self in the internal family system.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁸ Earley, *Self-Therapy*, 257.

¹⁷⁹ Earley, *Self-Therapy*, 267–79.

Chapter 4

Definitions and Practices of Compassion from Christian Perspectives

Chapter 4 will examine definitions, understandings, issues, and practices of compassion from a Christian perspective. It will include defining compassion through linguistic analysis of biblical passages. I will also explore spiritual practices and exercises for compassion from within the Christian tradition, such as Ignatian prayer and contemplation and the practical spiritual formation program of the Center for Engaged Compassion (CEC) and Triptykos School of Compassion.

Definitions of Compassion through Linguistic Analysis of Biblical Passages

In this part, I will explore Hebrew words and roots for compassion found in the Old Testament, which will expand the meaning of compassion as it has been discussed so far in this paper. This part will be divided into two sections: the usage of the words *compassion* and *mercy* in three versions of the Old Testament (NIV, NRSV, and KJV) and a study of Hebrew words and roots in the Old Testament that mean “compassion” or “mercy.”

The Usage of the Words *Compassion* and *Mercy* in the Old Testament

For this section, I sought to discover how many times the words *compassion* and *mercy* occur and where they are used in the Old Testament. I used the *Bible Works* program and concordances to the Old Testament to assist me with this research.

Through this process, I found that the words *compassion* and *mercy* are used to varying degrees among the versions of the Bible. The word *compassion* occurs 73 times in the New International Version (NIV), 59 times in the Old Testament (OT) and 14 times in the New Testament (NT), while the word *mercy* is used 129 times in the NIV, 70 times in the OT and 59 times in the NT. In the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV), the word *compassion* is used 78

times, 46 times in the OT and 32 times in the NT. The word *mercy* occurs 246 times in the NRSV, 78 times in the OT and 168 times in the NT. In the King James Version (KJV), the word *compassion* occurs 41 times, 20 times in the OT and 21 times in the NT, while the word *mercy* is utilized 276 times, 217 times in the OT and 59 times in the NT.

One of the most important discoveries in this process was that the word *compassion* is used nine times in the same place in all three versions: Deuteronomy 13:17, 30:3; 2 Kings 13:23; 2 Chronicles 30:9; Isaiah 49:15; Jeremiah 12:15; Lamentations 3:32; Ezekiel 16:5; and Micah 7:19. The word *mercy* occurs ten times in the same place in the three versions: Exodus 33:19; Psalms 51:1; Isaiah 30:18, 60:10; Jeremiah 31:20, 33:26, 42:12; Ezekiel 39:25; Hosea 14:3; and Zechariah 7:9. Nonetheless, I found it was difficult to discern the authentic meanings of the words *compassion* and *mercy* in the Old Testament. Interestingly, the word *compassion* is utilized much more in the NIV (1984) and the NRSV (1989) than in the KJV (1769), and the word *mercy* occurs more often in the KJV than in the NIV and the NRSV. This suggests that the use of the word *compassion* in translating certain Hebrew words has become more common in recent times. Oliver Davies, the author of *A Theology of Compassion*, points out that “there is a sense in which ‘compassion’ as a unified concept, unequivocally implying ‘suffering with,’ is more modern in kind.”¹

¹ Oliver Davies, *A Theology of Compassion: Metaphysics of Difference and the Renewal of Tradition* (Grand Rapids, Mich: William B. Eerdmans Pub, 2003), 252.

Word	New International Version (NIV)	New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)	King James Version (KJV)
Compassion in the Old Testament	Exod 33:19; Deut 13:17 ; 28:54; 30:3 ; 32:36; Judg 2:18; 1 Kgs 3:26; 2 Kgs 13:23 ; 2 Chr 30:9 ; Neh 9:19, 27f; Ps 51:1; 77:9; 90:13; 102:13; 103:4, 13; 116:5; 119:77, 156; 135:14; 145:9; Isa 13:18 ; 14:1; 27:11; 30:18; 49:10 , 13, 15 ; 51:3; 54:7f, 10; 60:10; 63:7, 15; Jer 12:15 ; 13:14; 15:6; 21:7; 30:18; 31:20; 33:26; 42:12; Lam 3:32 ; Ezek 9:5 ; 16:5 ; 39:25; Hos 2:19; 11:8; 13:14; 14:3; Amos 1:11; Jonah 3:9f; Mic 7:19 ; Zech 7:9; 10:6; Mal 3:17 (59 times)	Deut 13:8, 17; 30:3 ; 32:36; Judg 21:6, 15; 1 Sam 23:21; 1 Kgs 3:26; 8:50; 2 Kgs 13:23 ; 2 Chr 30:9 ; 36:15, 17; Ps 77:9; 79:8; 90:13; 102:13; 103:13; 106:45; 135:14; 145:9; Isa 9:17 ; 14:1; 27:11; 49:13, 15 ; 54:7f, 10; 63:15; Jer 12:15 ; 13:14; 21:7; 30:18; Lam 3:32 ; Ezek 16:5 ; Dan 1:9; Hos 11:8; 13:14; Mic 7:19 ; Zech 1:16; 10:6; 12:10 (46 times)	Exod 2:6; Deut 13:17; 30:3 ; 1 Sam 23:21; 1 Kgs 8:50; 2 Kgs 13:23 ; 2 Chr 30:9 ; 36:15, 17; Ps 78:38; 86:15; 111:4; 112:4; 145:8; Isa 49:15 ; Jer 12:15 ; Lam 3:32 ; Ezek 16:5 ; Mic 7:19 (20 times)
Mercy in the Old Testament	Exod 33:19 ; Deut 13:17; 28:54; 30:3; 32:36; Judg 2:18; 1 Kgs 3:26; 2 Kgs 13:23; 2 Chr 30:9; Neh 9:19, 27f; Ps 51:1 ; 77:9; 90:13; 102:13; 103:4, 13; 116:5; 119:77, 156; 135:14; 145:9; Isa 13:18 ; 14:1; 27:11; 30:18 ; 49:10, 13, 15; 51:3; 54:7f, 10; 60:10 ; 63:7, 15; Jer 12:15 ; 13:14; 15:6; 21:7; 30:18; 31:20 ; 33:26 ; 42:12 ; Lam 3:32 ; Ezek 9:5 ; 16:5; 39:25 ; Hos 2:19; 11:8; 13:14; 14:3 ; Amos 1:11; Jonah 3:9f; Mic 7:19 ; Zech 7:9 ; 10:6; Mal 3:17 (70 times)	Gen 43:14; Exod 25:17ff; 26:34; 30:6; 31:7; 33:19 ; 35:12; 37:6ff; 39:35; 40:20; Lev 16:2, 13ff; Num 7:89; Deut 7:2; Josh 11:20; 2 Sam 24:14; 1 Chr 21:13; 28:11; Neh 1:11; Job 9:15; 16:13; Ps 23:6 ; 25:6; 40:11; 51:1 ; 69:16; 103:4; 119:77, 156; 123:2f; Prov 12:10; 21:10; 28:13; Isa 13:18 ; 30:18 ; 47:6; 55:7; 60:10 ; 63:7; Jer 6:23 ; 16:5; 31:20 ; 33:26 ; 42:12 ; 50:42; Lam 2:2 , 21; Ezek 39:25 ; Dan 2:18; 4:27; 6:11; 9:9; Hos 2:19; 14:3 ; Hab 1:17; 3:2; Zech 1:12 ; 7:9 (78 times)	Gen 19:19; 24:27; 39:21; 43:14; Exod 15:13 ; 20:6; 25:17ff; 26:34; 30:6; 31:7; 33:19 ; 34:7; 35:12; 37:6ff; 39:35; 40:20; Lev 16:2, 13ff; Num 7:89; 14:18f; Deut 5:10; 7:2, 9, 12; 13:17; Judg 1:24; 2 Sam 7:15; 15:20; 22:51; 1 Kgs 3:6; 8:23; 1 Chr 16:34, 41; 17:13; 28:11; 2 Chr 1:8; 5:13; 6:14; 7:3, 6; 20:21; Ezra 3:11; 7:28; 9:9; Neh 1:5, 11; 9:32; 13:22; Job 37:13; Ps 4:1; 5:7; 6:2; 9:13; 13:5; 18:50; 21:7; 23:6; 25:7, 10, 16; 27:7; 30:10; 31:7, 9; 32:10; 33:18, 22; 36:5; 37:21; 51:1; 52:8; 57:3, 10; 59:10, 16f; 61:7; 62:12; 66:20; 69:13; 77:8; 85:7, 10; 86:5, 13, 15f; 89:2, 14, 24, 28; 90:14; 94:18; 98:3; 100:5; 101:1; 102:13; 103:8, 11, 17; 106:1; 107:1; 108:4; 109:12, 16, 21, 26; 115:1; 118:1ff, 29; 119:64, 124; 123:2f; 130:7; 136:1ff; 138:8; 143:12; 145:8; 147:11; Prov 3:3; 14:21f, 31; 16:6; 20:28; 21:21; 28:13; Isa 9:17 ; 14:1; 16:5; 27:11; 30:18 ; 47:6; 49:10, 13; 54:8, 10; 55:7; 60:10 ; Jer 6:23; 13:14; 21:7; 30:18; 31:20 ; 33:11 , 26 ; 42:12 ; 50:42; Ezek 39:25 ; Dan 4:27; 9:4; Hos 1:6f; 2:4, 23; 4:1; 6:6; 10:12; 12:6; 14:3 ; Jonah 2:8; Mic 6:8; 7:18, 20; Hab 3:2; Zech 1:12 ; 7:9; 10:6 (217 times)

Table1. The Usage of the Words *Compassion* and *Mercy* in the Old Testament

Therefore, to explore the meaning and conceptualization of compassion in the Old Testament, I was convinced that I needed to consider Hebrew words and etymologies related to *compassion* and *mercy* in the Old Testament. Davies asserts that careful linguistic analysis is necessary to discover the meaning and substance of compassion, saying “there is accordingly a rich diversity in the terminology and conceptualization of compassion in the Old Testament, which requires careful linguistic analysis.”²

A Study of the Hebrew Words Translated as “Compassion”

I chose to use Exodus 33:19 to help me discover the authentic meaning and etymology of compassion in the OT. The reason I selected this verse is that it shows the compassionate, merciful, divine attributes of God as he reveals his name to his people. Thus, when I studied the Hebrew words and roots in this verse, I was able to gain insight into the meanings of compassion found in the Old Testament.

First, the meaning and substance of compassion can be found through a reading of Exodus 33:12-23. These verses, especially Exodus 33:19, describe the compassionate action of God toward Moses and Israel in his self-naming as YHWH. In addition, God tells Moses about his divine attributes as follows:

I will have **mercy** on whom I will have **mercy**,
and I will have **compassion** on whom I will have **compassion**. (Exodus 33:19, NIV)

וְרַחֲמֵי אֱת־אֲשֶׁר אֲרַחֵם: וְהַנֶּחֱמִי אֱת־אֲשֶׁר אֶחֱמֶה

The couplets with רַחֵם and נֶחֱם in Ex. 33.19 reveal God as a merciful and compassionate being.³ I will first examine the etymology, meanings, and parent noun of רַחֵם, and then I will study the etymology, meanings, and parent noun of נֶחֱם.

² Davies, *Theology of Compassion*, 240.

³ רַחֵם is used six times in the Old Testament (Ex. 33:19; Jer. 13:14, 30:18; Hos. 1:6, 7, 2:6). These passages refer to God’s compassion for his people.

Parent Noun ⁴	Meaning
רַחֵם	Love deeply; have mercy, be compassionate
רֶחֶם רֶחֶם	Womb
רַחֲמִים	Tender mercy
רַחוּם	Compassionate
רַחֲמָנִי	Compassionate

Table2. Parent Noun of רַחֵם

The verb רַחֵם, from רַחֵם, means to love deeply, have mercy, and be compassionate. It also signifies the deep love and compassion of a father or mother for his or her children based on their natural bond. Considering other OT passages, we find in Isaiah 49:15 a mother's love for her nursing child compared with the compassionate actions of God. Psalm 103:13 likewise uses a father's love for his children to describe the compassion of God. These verses point to two concepts important to the meaning of the verb רַחֵם: the first is that God has a strong relationship with those whom God calls his children; the second is the totally free choice of God to reveal himself as merciful and compassionate.⁵ Thus, the verb רַחֵם shows the compassion, grace, and mercy God has for his children.

In addition, רַחֵם and רַחֵם suggest “the fellow-feeling of a sibling group born of the same mother,”⁶ and they are related to רֶחֶם and רֶחֶם, or “womb.”⁷ In fact, the OT recognizes that human life is from the womb, where God alone creates human beings (Job 10:18). In other words, from the perspective of the authors of the OT, all creatures are created by God in the

⁴ R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1981), 2:841.

⁵ Harris, Archer, and Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 2:842.

⁶ Davies, *Theology of Compassion*, 243.

⁷ רֶחֶם was used 25 times in the OT as follows: five times in Job, four times each in Exodus and Numbers, three times each in Genesis, Jeremiah, and Psalms, two times in 1 Samuel, and once in Hosea. רַחֵם was used four times in the OT as follows: Gen. 49:25; Isa. 46:3; Ezekiel 20:26; and Proverbs 30:16. “רַחֵם / רֶחֶם serve as a general term to denote the female sexual organs and the genitalia as a whole, where a child develops between conception and birth.” G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry, *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, Vol. 13 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004), 456.

womb: “Birth and conception was controlled by God who opens (Gen 29:31) or closes (Gen 20:18) the womb.”⁸ Accordingly, birth is a blessing from God (Gen 49:25) and a compassionate action of God for his people. All human beings have life from the womb, which life originated with God’s compassion.

רחמים is also related to רחם, “to have compassion,” and רחם/רחם, “the womb.” רחמים denotes one’s deep emotions and tender mercy and compassion for one’s children and family. Genesis 43:30 shows Joseph’s tender mercy for his brothers through his seeking a private place in order to express his emotions of compassion. In 1 Kings 3:26, a mother’s compassion for her child elicits an expression of her deep emotion. In addition, רחמים, as God’s tender mercy and expression of free love and grace for his people, is found in the following verses: 2 Chronicles 30:9, Isaiah 54:7, Psalm 51:1, Psalm 103:4, and Hosea 2:19.⁹

Second, the adjective חנון, meaning “gracious,” occurs in combination with רחם eleven times out of thirteen and is used for the gracious actions of God. In Exodus 33:19, חנון indicates the gracious and compassionate nature of God toward his people, suggesting the idea of motherly or fatherly compassion.¹⁰

חנן	Being gracious, showing pity
חנון	Gracious
חן	Favor, grace
גינה	Favor

Table3. Parent Noun of חנון

חנון originates from the noun “חן” which occurs 69 times in the OT.¹¹ חן has two essential meanings, “grace” and “favor,” which express a positive disposition toward other

⁸ Harris, Archer, and Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 2:842.

⁹ Harris, Archer, and Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 2:843.

¹⁰ חנון is used to refer to the compassionate God in the following verses: Ex. 22:27; 34:6; II Chr. 30:9; Neh. 9:17, 31; Ps. 86:15, 103:8, 111:4, 116:5, 145:8; Joel 2:13; and Jon. 4:2.

¹¹ The noun חן is used forty-three times in the idiom, “to find favor in someone’s eyes,” seven times with the verb “to give,” and three times with the verb “to obtain.” It also occurs fourteen times in independent uses. (Harris, Archer, and Waltke, 694.)

persons who need help. It is used most often with the idiom, “find favor in someone’s eyes.”

This means that God grants favor and grace to his people in the sight of other people or God self with a compassionate heart.¹²

The verb חָנַן, meaning “to be gracious and to show grace or favor,” suggests “a heartfelt response by someone who has something to give to one who has a need.”¹³ Furthermore, it connotes active and positive acceptance, favor, and grace. In this respect, “to be gracious means to aid the poor, feed the hungry, deliver those in distress from defeat and death.”¹⁴ חָנַן cannot coexist with any judgment; it has to be entirely grace and favor. With חָנַן, God does not judge, but offers his people favor and grace through his compassionate actions. חֲנּוּן as the parent noun of the verb חָנַן, meaning “favor,” occurs only once, in Jeremiah 16:13, to express that God will not give favor to his people.

As I studied the etymology, meanings, and parent nouns of חָנַן and חֲנּוּן relating to compassion in Exodus 33:19, I found that the words and verses in the Old Testament that relate to *compassion* express the compassionate actions of God for his people. This compassion of God is like the compassion of a father or mother for his or her children. The meaning of *compassion* in the OT is also associated with the present meaning of the word “compassion,” meaning “to suffer with.” The compassionate heart of God expresses his suffering with his people.

Ignatian Prayer and Contemplation

The Christian tradition has many forms of prayer, meditation, and contemplation. The most attractive one to me is the Ignatian form of prayer and contemplation. The reason for my

¹² It is found in the following places: Gen. 6:8; 18:3; 19:19; 30:27; 32:6; 33:8, 10, 15; 34:11; 39:4; 47:25, 29; 50:4; Ex. 3:21; 11:3; 12:36; 33:12f, 16f; 34:9; Num. 11:11, 15; 32:5; Deut. 24:1; Judg. 6:17; Ruth 2:2, 10, 13; 1 Sam. 1:18; 16:22; 20:3, 29; 25:8; 27:5; 2 Sam. 14:22; 15:25; 16:4; 1 Kings 11:19; Esth. 2:15, 17; 5:2, 8; 7:3; 8:5; Ps. 45:3; 84:12; Prov. 1:9; 3:4, 34; 4:9; 5:19; 11:16; 13:15; 17:8; 22:1, 11; 28:23; Eccl. 9:11; 10:12; Jer. 31:2; Nah. 3:4; Zech. 4:7; 12:10.

¹³ Harris, Archer, and Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 2:693.

¹⁴ Davies, *Theology of Compassion*, 24.

preference is that there are many dispositions and characteristics that nurture and cultivate compassion among the Ignatian spiritual ways. In other words, compassionate living through connecting the divine, Self, and others is woven throughout the Ignatian spiritual path. Thus, I will explore Ignatian prayer and contemplation in regard to its focus on compassion. This section is divided into three parts. The first is about the life of St. Ignatius of Loyola, the second deals with Ignatian spirituality, and the third will explore Ignatian prayer, including imaginative contemplation and Examen.

St. Ignatius of Loyola¹⁵

Several images are necessary to reflect Ignatius's whole life because he was a would-be romantic hero, a courtier and a soldier, a pilgrim, and an evangelizer. According to David Lonsdale, "those images represent successive stages of Ignatius's life."¹⁶

Iñigo López de Loyola was born in 1491 in the Basque province of northern Spain, the thirteenth child of a noble family. In his childhood and youth, he imagined himself to be a character in a romantic novel who wins a war and gains the love of a lady. As he had dreamed, he was sent away at the age of fourteen or fifteen to the home of his father's friend, who was the treasurer of the Kingdom of Castile. There he was to be trained as a page. He spent his early life learning to be a courtier and soldier and finally became a courtier and soldier who desired worldly fame, wealth, and pleasure.

However, Iñigo suffered an accident that dramatically changed his life. While a soldier in

¹⁵ I referred to several books to summarize the life of Ignatius. The primary books were Kevin F. O'Brien, *The Ignatian Adventure: Experiencing the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius in Daily Life* (Chicago: Loyola Press, 2011); and James Martin, *The Jesuit Guide to (Almost) Everything: A Spirituality for Real Life* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2010). Other sources were the following: Margaret Silf, *Inner Compass: An Invitation to Ignatian Spirituality* (Chicago: Loyola Press, 1999). Tim Muldoon, *The Ignatian Workout: Daily Spiritual Exercises for a Healthy Faith* (Chicago: Loyola Press, 2004). David L. Fleming, *What Is Ignatian Spirituality?* (Chicago: Loyola Press, 2008). Ignatius, *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius: Based on Studies in the Language of the Autograph*, trans. Louis J. Puhl (New York: Vintage Books, 2000).

¹⁶ David Lonsdale, *Eyes to See, Ears to Hear: An Introduction to Ignatian Spirituality* [rev. ed.] (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2000), 35.

the northern town of Pamplona in 1521, the French army surrounded and attacked the fortress that Iñigo was helping to defend. During the battle, his leg was struck and shattered by a cannonball. He returned to Loyola to recuperate from his wound. He suffered not only from physical wounds but also from mental lethargy that led him to think he should give up his pursuit of worldly fame and desires.

In the midst of his convalescence, he began to read *The Life of Christ* by the German, Carthusian Ludolph of Saxony, and a collection of stories about the lives of the saints. The stories of Jesus Christ and the saints' lives impressed him and caused him to reflect on his past life that was disconnected from God. His desire to be a romantic hero was transformed into a determination to become a spiritual hero who has a deep grounding in and relationship with God. Thus, he determined to follow the lives of the saints and Jesus Christ's life. In 1523, after recovering from his wound, he left his safe country and home and stepped into a new journey as a pilgrim to Jerusalem.

As a pilgrim, Iñigo performed his own ritual at the Benedictine abbey on Montserrat near Barcelona. After an all-night vigil there, he took off his noble clothes, gave them to a beggar, and wore a sackcloth garment like the poor pilgrims did. Moreover, he left his sword and armor before the altar of the Virgin Mary. This signified the beginning of his pilgrimage. After leaving the abbey at Montserrat he stayed for ten months in the nearby small town of Manresa, developing the practices of his spiritual life, including solitary prayer, fasting, and begging for his daily food. However, in the process of performing his spiritual practices, he experienced a dark side to them, such as spiritual dryness, self-criticism about his sinfulness, self-doubt, and despair, which led him to observe his interior life. According to Kevin O'Brien, a member of the society of Jesus, "Iñigo discerned carefully the interior movements of his soul: the attraction, the

feelings, thoughts, and desires that led him to greater intimacy with Jesus Christ and those that were distractions to his spiritual growth.”¹⁷ At this time, he thought he could restore his relationship with his separate Self through becoming aware of his own internal movements. In other words, he might connect with his authentic Self in an interior equilibrium by becoming grounded in God. Through his spiritual practices, he had several mystical experiences of union with God. His spiritual life as a pilgrim affected the rest of his life. During this time, he began to make notes about his spiritual ideas, insights, life, and practices. These were developed into spiritual practices that included prayer and contemplation. The practices were grounded in the *Spiritual Exercises* (text from the *Spiritual Exercises* of Ignatius will be presented in italics).

Iñigo arrived in Jerusalem in 1523 and wanted to live in the Holy Land, but he was not given permission to live there. He accepted the situation as God’s will and returned to Barcelona to receive an academic education and be ordained. Thus, Iñigo the pilgrim became an evangelizer to help the souls of others. This period of his life led him to connect with other people. While studying in Spain, he continued to teach his Spiritual Exercises based on his experiences; his purpose was to nurture others’ souls. Then he went to the University of Paris to study more; there he gathered some friends who were attracted to his spiritual way and exercises; they became the first members of the Society of Jesus. He was called Ignatius because that was the Latin form of his name. Ignatius and his friends were ordained in 1537 and the Society of Jesus was formally approved as a religious order in 1540 in order to help the souls of others. During the rest of his life in Rome, he continued to write the *Constitution* for the Jesuit society and to lead retreats for deepening the spiritual lives of others. Ignatius ended his spiritual journey on July 31, 1556. At his death, the Society of Jesus numbered about 1,000 members. Many houses and colleges were founded in various provinces and countries, including Brazil, India,

¹⁷ O’Brien, *Ignatian Adventure*, 7.

Europe, and Japan, to spread Ignatius's belief about helping souls.

I can examine the life of Ignatius according to three dimensions. The first is his connection with God. Ignatius was a courtier and soldier who sought worldly fame, prestige, and privilege and was disconnected from the divine, God. However, his failure and wound in the war allowed him to realize his disconnection from God. He then desired a relationship with God through the life of Jesus Christ and came to experience the presence of God with a close intimacy.

The second dimension is Ignatius's reflection on the interior movements of his life. After restoring his connection with God, Ignatius aimed to live the life of a pilgrim, practicing a spiritual way of engaging in the presence of and union with God. However, he experienced despair, self-doubt, self-critique, and spiritual dryness in his spiritual life. He was aware that such inner movements caused disconnection from God and his deepest self or heart. Thus, he became interested in spiritual ways to reflect on his interior movements, such as spiritual consolation and dissolution. His new spiritual way enabled him to reflect on the presence of God in his daily life or in special events and to connect with God and his deepest self.

The third dimension of Ignatius's life is his desire to help the souls of others. He created many spiritual exercises and performed many retreats in order to nurture others' souls. He focused on relationships with others in his spirituality.

Ignatian Spirituality

It is unfortunate that the spirituality of St. Ignatius of Loyola is defined as simply a rule, a norm, or a certain set of practices. Ignatius was not interested in rules or settled methods but in "our way of proceeding."¹⁸ He lived as a pilgrim in his life. To live as a pilgrim does not mean that there is no destination or direction. To be a pilgrim is to be one who is on the way toward a

¹⁸ David L. Fleming, *What Is Ignatian Spirituality?* (Chicago: Loyola Press, 2008), vii.

destination. Thus, Ignatius emphasized that we are proceeding as pilgrims. Ignatian spirituality is not a fixed concept or idea but can be understood as a spirituality that is dynamically changing and progressing toward a destination. Thus, Martin defines Ignatian spirituality as “a spiritual way of proceeding.”¹⁹ Ignatius did not try to explore abstract and systematic ideas and theological knowledge. Rather, he wanted to instruct people in a spiritual way, including his own understanding of God, reflections on his own life, and finding God in his life. In this respect, David Fleming, a member of the Jesuit community, also argues that Ignatian spirituality is “a spiritual way of proceeding that offers a vision of life, an understanding of God, a reflective approach to living, a contemplative form of praying, a reverential attitude to our world, and an expectation of finding God daily.”²⁰ Thus, the spiritual way of Ignatius is defined as a way of proceeding on the journey of a pilgrim and participating in the presence of God.

I also do not explore a fixed and settled rule, concept, or practice of Ignatian spirituality but spiritual ways that include characteristics of compassion from Ignatian spirituality.

The first spiritual way to nurture compassion in Ignatian spirituality is to “discern the presence of God.”²¹ Ignatius was interested in gaining an awareness of God, who he believed was present with him in his daily life. He was interested in discerning the presence of God because he was convinced that discernment of God enables us to be with God and to participate in the activities of God.²² Therefore, he aimed to discern the presence and activities of God in this world in the present moment. The spiritual way of Ignatius keeps us to be attentive to the presence of God. According to Fleming, “the techniques and practices associated with Ignatian

¹⁹ Martin, *Jesuit Guide to (Almost) Everything*, 1.

²⁰ Fleming, *What Is Ignatian Spirituality?*, viii.

²¹ Fleming, *What Is Ignatian Spirituality?*, 19.

²² Fleming, *What Is Ignatian Spirituality?*, 19.

spirituality are all designed to help us to be more attentive to this active God.”²³

The second spiritual way of Ignatius is to reflect on one’s life. The reflective way allows one to be aware of the presence of God in one’s daily life by reflecting on the experiences of one’s day or a particular event.²⁴ It is not just about remembering experiences. The reflective way of Ignatius is to discern the presence of God: when God was with me or when God was separate from me in my daily life. Thus, Ignatius created a reflective prayer as the primary method of prayer called the daily Examen.²⁵ Its purpose is to recognize the presence of God and discern God’s will. In sum, the reflective way of Ignatius allows one to recognize how God was present in one’s daily experiences and to be aware of God’s activities in the present moment and in all things.

The third spiritual way of Ignatius is “finding God in all things.”²⁶ Experiencing the presence of God is not confined to any place, time, or practice. For Ignatius, we can discover God in all things because all things are created by a loving and compassionate God. Thus, through all things, we can discern God more easily²⁷ and practice the love and compassion of God more readily.²⁸ In this respect, Martin argues that “Ignatian spirituality considers everything an important element of your life.”²⁹ Everything that we experience or that comes near us can become a spiritual way to discern God. Fleming also emphasizes that we can discover God in all things, explaining,

God is ever-present, constantly in touch, communicating with us in many ways: in prayer and reading scripture, of course, but also through the events of our lives – through the people we meet and the work we do, through the things we see and hear, through our

²³ Fleming, *What Is Ignatian Spirituality?*, 38.

²⁴ Fleming, *What Is Ignatian Spirituality?*, 19.

²⁵ Fleming, *What Is Ignatian Spirituality?*, 20.

²⁶ Martin, *Jesuit Guide to (Almost) Everything*, 5.

²⁷ Fleming, *What Is Ignatian Spirituality?*, 45.

²⁸ O’Brien, *Ignatian Adventure*, 69.

²⁹ O’Brien, *Ignatian Adventure*, 69.

interior moods and affections.³⁰

Thus, the spiritual way of Ignatius enables us to be actively aware of God in all things.

Fourthly, the spiritual way of Ignatius concentrates on internal movements, which include thoughts, emotions, desires, attraction, and will, in our lives in connection to God. This way leads us to notice “where they are coming from and where they are leading us.”³¹ In particular, it invites us to respond to interior movements with self-compassion and through restoring connection with God. Awareness of inner movements and responding to them make it possible for a person to connect with one’s authentic Self. However, when we are not aware of inner movements and do not respond to them properly, these movements keep us from loving God, ourselves, and others. Kevin O’Brien, an author of *The Ignatian Adventure*, observes that inner movements “create chaos in our souls and lead us to make poor choices.”³²

Ignatian Prayer

Ignatian spirituality includes two kinds of prayer. The first kind Ignatius called contemplation. Its primary characteristic is to use the uniquely human capacity of imagination. The second kind is the Examen, a reflective form of prayer to discern the presence of God.³³ I will explore both types of prayer: imaginative contemplation and Examen.

Imaginative Contemplation. When most people speak of Ignatian prayer, the form they are thinking of is imaginative contemplation. Ignatius believed that the power of human imagination can be a valuable resource to experience the presence of God within our human intellects, thoughts, wills, and memories.³⁴ Thus, Ignatian contemplation uses the human capacities of memory, imagination, affection, and will in order to discern the presence of God in

³⁰ Fleming, *What Is Ignatian Spirituality?*, 44.

³¹ O’Brien, *Ignatian Adventure*, 17.

³² O’Brien, *Ignatian Adventure*, 57.

³³ Lonsdale, *Eyes to See, Ears to Hear*, 110.

³⁴ O’Brien, *Ignatian Adventure*, 141.

daily experiences and in the present moment.³⁵ In this respect, David Lonsdale points out the distorted perceptions of Ignatian contemplation in which Ignatian prayer has been misunderstood to be intellectual and abstract without any practical and concrete elements.³⁶ Since Ignatian contemplation uses all human capacities, it invites us to engage the whole person in becoming aware of the presence and will of God.³⁷

Ignatian contemplation is grounded on imagination. For Ignatius, his own imagination enabled him to develop a deep connection with God and experience the presence of God.³⁸ Ignatius provides two kinds of imaginative contemplation in the *Spiritual Exercises*.³⁹ The first one involves contemplation on the mysteries of the incarnation, approaching it from God's perspective. We use the imagination to think of why God was incarnated as Jesus Christ in this world, what things concern God, and what God wants us to do. This imaginative contemplation allows us to see all the phenomena of the world from God's perspective and to view them with God's compassion.⁴⁰

The second kind of imaginative contemplation is to enter into stories. Imagination in contemplation plays an important role by allowing us to participate in the stories of the Bible, especially the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. Through this imaginative contemplation, we engage in the activities of Jesus found in the Gospels, such as "Jesus interacting with others, Jesus making decisions, Jesus moving about, [and] Jesus ministering."⁴¹ This allows a person to freely create environments, moods, sounds, and scenes in relation to the stories. Contemplators can even be present in the stories and can be characters in the stories through the use of their

³⁵ Tetlow, *Making Choices in Christ*, 72.

³⁶ Lonsdale, *Eyes to See, Ears to Hear*, 111.

³⁷ Lonsdale, *Eyes to See, Ears to Hear*, 115.

³⁸ Fleming, *What Is Ignatian Spirituality?*, 55.

³⁹ Fleming, *What Is Ignatian Spirituality?*, 57–58.

⁴⁰ Fleming, *What Is Ignatian Spirituality?*, 57.

⁴¹ Fleming, *What Is Ignatian Spirituality?*, 58.

imaginations.⁴² In this type of contemplation we use the five senses to pay attention to the stories, asking ourselves, “What do you see? What do you hear? What do you smell? What do you feel? What do you taste?”⁴³ According to David Lonsdale, “We explore the stories and images with the mind, respond to them with our feelings, interact with them in imagination, reflect on them in solitude and calm and allow these varied activities ultimately to influence our choices and commitments.”⁴⁴ What we must ensure in this contemplation is that we do not just remember the stories about the life and ministry of Jesus Christ.⁴⁵ The clear purpose of imaginative contemplation is to become aware of the presence of God and to discern the will of God in the stories, even in the present moment.

Examen or Examen of Consciousness. Another form of Ignatian prayer is the “Examen” or “Examen of consciousness” in his *Spiritual Exercises*. The Examen prayer begins with reflection on a certain past period (a day, a week, a month) or an event or experience. Then one reflects on God’s activities and presence in the given period or event or experience. As Fleming expresses it, the purpose of the Examen prayer is “to discern the footprints of God in our own experience.”⁴⁶ It encourages us to see when we are connected with or disconnected from God in our daily lives. In the Examen, we observe internal movements, such as the ways our emotions, feelings, thoughts, and wills have responded to the given period, event, or experience.⁴⁷ Thus, while praying through the Examen, we become aware of the will and presence of God, who busily works in our daily lives in each moment. This practice is a very important element for compassionate living because it helps us to reflect on our connection with God, Self, and others

⁴² O’Brien, *Ignatian Adventure*, 141.

⁴³ Martin, *Jesuit Guide to (Almost) Everything*, 147–50.

⁴⁴ Lonsdale, *Eyes to See, Ears to Hear*, 115.

⁴⁵ O’Brien, *Ignatian Adventure*, 141.

⁴⁶ Fleming, *What Is Ignatian Spirituality?*, 19.

⁴⁷ Lonsdale, *Eyes to See, Ears to Hear*, 124.

in our daily lives.

There are five stages in Ignatian Examen.⁴⁸ In the first stage we give thanks for God's grace and blessings. In the second stage, we ask God to be with us and to help us recognize our situation in relation to God. The third stage is to look back over the given day or event or experience to detect the presence of God and to discern emotions and thoughts in connection with God. One of the most important aspects of this stage is to reflect on when God has been present with us or when we have removed ourselves from God.⁴⁹ In the fourth stage, "we turn to God our Creator and Lord and speak directly to him about what we have found."⁵⁰ For example, we confess our sins from our daily lives with deep sorrow and ask God to forgive them. In the final stage, we pray to remain in God's presence and grace in our daily lives in the present and future, and then we pray to God with a heart full of gratitude.

Practical Examen in Ignatian Spirituality. We have many versions of the Examen because they have been developed for diverse audiences and over many years. Although instructors may emphasize different versions, the principles and foundation of Ignatius remains the same. I will share two kinds of Examen in this section. The first one is a general version of Examen presented by David Fleming. It follows the five stages or points mentioned above. The second one is a modified version of an Examen presented by Tim Muldoon, a Catholic theologian, writer, and spiritual director. It is closely related to nurturing compassion. I revised this Examen in accordance with the form used by Fleming.

The Examen of Consciousness by David L. Fleming⁵¹

God, thank you.

I thank you, God, for always being with me, but
especially I am grateful that you are with me right now.

⁴⁸ Tetlow, *Making Choices in Christ*, 51–52.

⁴⁹ Fleming, *What Is Ignatian Spirituality?*, 21.

⁵⁰ Tetlow, *Making Choices in Christ*, 52.

⁵¹ Fleming, *What Is Ignatian Spirituality?*, 21–22.

God, send your Holy Spirit upon me.

God, let the Holy Spirit enlighten my mind and
warm my heart that I may know where and
how we have been together this day.

God, let me look at my day.

God, where have I felt your presence, seen your face,
heard your word this day?

God, where have I ignored you, run from you,
perhaps even rejected you this day?

God, let me be grateful and ask forgiveness.

God, I thank you for the times this day we have been
together and worked together.

God, I am sorry for the ways that I have offended you
by what I have done or what I did not do.

God, stay close.

God, I ask that you draw me ever closer to you this
day and tomorrow.

God, you are the God of my life – thank you.

The Examen by Tim Muldoon, Modified by Sung-Jin Yang⁵²

Pray for Understanding

God, help me to understand how you are working with me in my everyday life.

God, lead me to discern your activity with me through this prayer.

Give Thanks

I thank you, God, for always being with me; I am grateful that you are with me right now.

I thank you, God, for your blessings and grace in my daily life.

I thank you, God, for the loving people you have sent to me.

I thank you, God, for daily food to eat.

Pay Attention to Your Feelings

God, help me to pay attention to my feelings, both the positive and negative ones in my life.

God, lead me to understand where such feelings emerge from.

God, let me discern what they want me to do in connection with You.

Examine One of Your Feelings

God, help me to have a deeper understanding of my strong feelings, whether they are positive or negative.

God, lead me to become open to such feelings with an honest heart.

God, let me become familiar with this feeling in my conversation with You.

Look Ahead

God, help me to understand how this will affect my choices in the future.

Closing Prayer

God, I ask that you draw me ever closer to you this day and tomorrow.

I thank you, God, for being with me in the present and in my daily life.

⁵² Muldoon, *Ignatian Workout*, 33–35.

Radical Compassion by the Center for Engaged Compassion and

Triptykos School of Compassion

Buddhism has explored the cultivation of compassion, and Western scholars who are interested in Buddhist understandings of compassion have recently developed and applied compassion to several fields, including physiology, psychology, family studies, and neuroscience. However, although there have been many resources for nurturing compassion in the Christian tradition, Christians have paid little attention to nurturing compassion.⁵³ Moreover, there have been no concrete practices to cultivate compassion formation in any Christian organizations or centers. Recently though, the Triptykos School of Compassion and the Center for Engaged Compassion (CEC) at the Claremont School of Theology within the Claremont Lincoln University have developed a curriculum for compassion formation with a Christian approach. The curriculum for compassion practices will contribute to freeing people from their suffering and cultivate flourishing in their lives. Thus, in this part, I will offer a brief history of the Triptykos School of Compassion and the CEC. I will also explore core principles, essential components, compassion practices, and the curriculum for compassionate living.

Brief Introduction to the Triptykos School of Compassion and the Center for Engaged Compassion

Dr. Frank Rogers, Dr. Andrew Dreitcer, and Mark Yaconelli founded the Triptykos School of Compassion in 2009. The ultimate purpose of Triptykos, which means “threefold,” is to equip people with the skills, will, thoughts, emotions, and desires for compassionate living through diverse practices. At its formation, Triptykos had a basic and core question for developing principles and practices: “How does a person become a radically compassionate

⁵³ Frank Rogers Jr., *Cultivating the Pulse of Compassion: Core Principles and Practices Informed by the Way of Jesus* [Claremont School of Theology], n.d., 10.

person?” After struggling with the question, the founders came up with the idea of a “threefold spirituality” as the radical way of Jesus: to love God, love self, and love others.⁵⁴ From this perspective, cultivating a threefold spirituality frees people from their suffering and offers them a way to flourish through compassionate living. Thus, Triptykos has explored practices for compassion formation through a variety of formats, such as retreats, workshops, and research projects. The principles, teachings, projects, and practices conducted by Triptykos have become compassion practices for compassionate living.

The Triptykos School of Compassion has a deep partnership with the Center for Engaged Compassion (CEC) at Claremont School of Theology for promoting compassion practices. In 2013, Triptykos and the CEC completed a public curriculum entitled, “Practicing Compassion: Following the Spiritual Path of Jesus.”⁵⁵ This curriculum is based on the threefold spirituality concept that leads a person to love God, self, and others in accordance with the radical teachings and life of Jesus. It is a fourteen-week course, including two three-day retreats, weekly one-on-one spiritual guidance with a trained spiritual director, skills-based online instruction, weekly spiritual practices for daily life, small-group interactions around the practices, and readings and teachings to nurture skills and sensitivities for compassion formation.⁵⁶ This course forms people in a spirituality of radical compassion which we should walk as the spiritual path of Jesus. I will explain the meanings of compassion, the core teachings (including six components and principles of compassion), the goals and structure of the “Practicing Compassion” curriculum, and compassion practices.

⁵⁴ Triptykos, “About Triptykos,” accessed Oct. 16, 2013, <http://www.triptykos.com/teaching>.

⁵⁵ Rogers, Yaconelli, and Dreitcer, *Practicing Compassion*.

⁵⁶ Triptykos, “Certificate in Engaged Compassion,” accessed October 16, 2013, <http://www.triptykos.com/events-and-courses>.

Core Teachings of the Triptykos School of Compassion and the Center for Engaged Compassion

The teachings and life of Jesus are foundational to the Triptykos School of Compassion and the CEC. Triptykos and the CEC emphasize that the spiritual way which Jesus embodied is “radical.” His teachings and life emerged from his fundamental and deep faith in God. In this view, these provoked revolutionary changes to religious and institutional faith.⁵⁷ So the spiritual way of Jesus is called “radical.” Especially, the spiritual way of Jesus is summarized as a threefold spirituality: loving God in every dimension that a human has, cultivating abundant and flourishing life for oneself, and loving others as created in the image of God as much as oneself is. Jesus embodied this threefold spirituality in his life. Frank Rogers states, “the path of Jesus is a way of radical compassion.”⁵⁸

Thus, Triptykos and the CEC developed the threefold spirituality of Jesus into a spiritual path of radical compassion with three aspects. The spiritual way of radical compassion “deepens one’s connection to a compassionate source, restores one to a humanity fully loved and alive, and increases one’s capacities to be an instrument of compassion towards others in the world.”⁵⁹ In other words, there are three movements, including connection with a compassionate source, restoration of original humanity, and cultivation of compassion toward others.

Triptykos and the CEC describe these three movements as emerging from God’s heart by using an analogy of the human heart. In their explanation, the heart goes through a threefold rhythm: gathering problematic blood cells into the center, restoring them to their originally natural and healthy condition, and returning them to the body to transfer oxygen, absorb carbon dioxide, and provide nourishment. In this respect, God’s heart also pulsates in a threefold

⁵⁷ Frank Rogers Jr., *Rhythms of Radical Compassion: The Way of Jesus as a Threefold Spiritual Path* [Claremont School of Theology], n.d., 10.

⁵⁸ Rogers, *Rhythms of Radical Compassion*, 10.

⁵⁹ Rogers, Yaconelli, and Dreitcer, *Practicing Compassion*, 4.

movement: connecting a wounded person to the radically compassionate sacred source, reinstating whole humanity through relationship with the compassionate source, and returning the person into the world to heal wounds and the suffering of others with a compassionate heart.⁶⁰

In essence, God's heart is filled with compassion. God instilled in all creatures God's compassionate essence. Thus, all creatures pulse in the rhythms of compassion as the essence of God. The teachings and life of Jesus themselves also pulse in the heartbeat of God.

Six essential components of compassion. Triptykos and the CEC name the six essential components of compassion as follows: (1) paying attention (or contemplative awareness), (2) understanding (or empathic care), (3) loving with connection (or all-accepting presence), (4) sensing the Sacredness (or spiritual expansiveness), (5) embodying new life (or desire for flourishing), and (6) restorative action.⁶¹

The first of the six components of compassion is paying attention (or contemplative awareness). Paying attention is the first step toward compassion. It allows us to be aware of another's or our own authentic humanity without any distorted judgments or prejudices. We often project our own perspectives and experiences onto the lives and behaviors of others. This results in distorted views, bias, and partiality. According to Rogers, paying attention or contemplative awareness is the "the non-reactive, non-projective apprehension of another in the mystery of their unique particularity."⁶² It helps us to disentangle distorted and entwined lenses and to have the whole sight to perceive another as he or she is in his or her humanity.

The second component of compassion is understanding (or empathic care). When we

⁶⁰ Rogers, Yaconelli, and Dreitcer, *Practicing Compassion*, 4.

⁶¹ Frank Rogers Jr., *The Compassion Practice: Calibrating the Pulse of Our Lives to the Heartbeat of Love* [Claremont School of Theology], forthcoming, 24–30.

⁶² Rogers, *Compassion Practice*, 25.

perceive the humanity and dignity of another or the self, we enter into a process of understanding them. In other words, paying attention to another or the suffering self invites us to stand in the other's shoes with empathic care. In this stage, when we understand the other's or self's sufferings, wounds, desires, emotions, and thoughts with an empathic heart, we are touched in our compassionate core.

When we really understand the inner and deep entity of another with empathic care, we approach the third component of loving with connection (or all-accepting presence).

Understanding another leads to an embracing connection with and care for him or her. Thus, we become an all-accepting presence that is open, receptive, sensitive, responsive, and connected to another. As a result, we participate in the suffering and delight of another with loving connection.

The fourth component of compassion is sensing the Sacredness (or spiritual expansiveness). When we are an all-accepting presence for another, we sense that the Sacred source of compassion flows over and inside us. The reason is that our human compassion and capacity for care emerges from compassionate sources. Compassion is the essence of the Sacred as God and emerges from God's heart. Thus, when we are connected with the suffering of another, we sense the existence of the Sacred flowing within us and it is that Sacredness through which our spirit of compassion is expanded.

Sensing the Sacredness gives rise to the fifth component of embodying new life (or having a desire for flourishing) for the suffering self and others. While we are engaging in the suffering of another with empathic care, we want the other to be free from suffering. We also desire that the other's sufferings be transformed into peace, delight, happiness, and freedom. Thus, we seek flourishing life.

The desire for flourishing and new life seeds the sixth component of compassion,

restorative action. Compassion requires us to take specific action to alleviate the suffering of others and to nurture their flourishing in the fullness of compassionate living. If restorative action does not occur, compassion just remains in the mind and its power is reduced. Restorative action contributes not only to changing the suffering of another, it makes compassion flow into and fill the world.

These six components constitute the pulse of compassion. Each component interacts with the other components. If one decreases or disappears, the pulse of compassion is diminished. Compassion includes all six components. The first letters of the first through five components spell *PULSE*: *P* = paying attention, *U* = understanding, *L* = loving connection, *S* = sensing the Sacredness, and *E* = embodying new life. In other words, the components become the pulse of compassion.⁶³

Considering these six components, we realize that compassion is not simply awareness or emotion or thought or desire or action. Compassion emerges from diverse capacities of humans. Triptykos and the CEC emphasize that “compassion is an experiential gestalt, a holistic complex that involves and integrates the full range of human capacities – perception, emotion, cognition, physiology, motivation, and behavior.”⁶⁴

Christian principles of compassion. Triptykos and the CEC have explored the core principles and processes for cultivating compassion based on the teachings and life of Jesus. The primary principles are contained in the *Practicing Compassion* curriculum. I will explain the core principles from a Christian perspective. There are five core principles in the curriculum.

The first principle of Christian compassion is that “a God of compassion enfolds all of

⁶³ Rogers, *Compassion Practice*, 30.

⁶⁴ Rogers, Yaconelli, and Dreitcer, *Practicing Compassion*, 17.

creation.”⁶⁵ Seen from the perspectives of Triptykos and the CEC, compassion is the essence of God. The compassionate God embraces all creatures. In other words, all of creation is in the compassionate arms and hands of God although we are unaware of the presence of God. This principle gives us three insights for compassion formation. The first insight is that we are invited into connection with God in the enfoldment of the compassionate God. The second is that we can nurture this connection with the compassionate sacred even as we stand in the midst of our busy lives and interior turbulences. The third is how we connect with another is identical to connecting with God. When we are connected with another, God’s heart pulses through our heart to his or her heart.⁶⁶

The second principle of compassion is, “the essence of humanity is compassion in the image of God.”⁶⁷ Humans are created in the image of God. To the extent that compassion is the essence of God, humans also possess compassionate capacities. Triptykos and the CEC emphasize that being fully human is to embody and actualize compassion in a broken world.⁶⁸ There are some insights in this principle. The first is that the primary goal of Christian spirituality is to be a messenger embodying compassion. Second, compassion naturally occurs within us in that compassion is our essence. Third, since we are created in the image of God, our compassionate essence emerges from connection with God.⁶⁹

The third principle of Christian compassion is, “cultivating compassion for others begins with cultivating compassion for ourselves.”⁷⁰ In other words, nurturing compassion for ourselves is a precondition for cultivating compassion for others. Thus, to cultivate compassion

⁶⁵ Rogers, Yaconelli, and Dreitcer, *Practicing Compassion*, 18.

⁶⁶ Rogers, Yaconelli, and Dreitcer, *Practicing Compassion*, 18.

⁶⁷ Rogers, Yaconelli, and Dreitcer, *Practicing Compassion*, 19.

⁶⁸ Rogers, Yaconelli, and Dreitcer, *Practicing Compassion*, 19.

⁶⁹ Rogers, Yaconelli, and Dreitcer, *Practicing Compassion*, 19.

⁷⁰ Rogers, Yaconelli, and Dreitcer, *Practicing Compassion*, 19.

for others, we are encouraged to nurture self-compassion. In this respect, the question may arise: “Why do I need to cultivate compassion for myself if people are, by nature, compassionate beings and have compassionate capacities?” As the answer to the question, Triptykos and the CEC depict humans as disconnected from their compassionate essence by inner movements that obstruct connection to a true self. The inner movements include “reactive emotions such as anger, fear, despair, and disgust; internal voices such as self-loathing, perfectionism, blame, or judgment; and behavioral impulses in unawareness.”⁷¹ Thus, to restore our compassionate essence, we need to turn inward to what is going on within us. Triptykos and the CEC encourage us to take a “U” turn to nurture compassion for ourselves.⁷² Taking a “U” turn means listening to the cries of our interior movements and paying attention to them. Inner movements are viewed not as enemies, but as parts of ourselves to care for and embrace. As a practice for taking a “U” turn, Triptykos and the CEC provide the PULSE of compassion based on the six essential components described previously to nurture compassion for ourselves: Paying attention, Understanding, Loving with connection, Sensing the Sacredness, and Embracing new life.⁷³ The pulse of compassion is a spiritual way to cultivate compassion for ourselves. It reconnects us to a compassionate God as well as to our compassionate essence.

The fourth principle of Christian compassion is, “cultivating compassion for others flows from our truest self, restored and attuned to God’s compassion for the world.”⁷⁴ Restoring our true and compassionate truth in relationship with the compassionate God through taking a “U” turn, self-compassion extends into cultivating compassion for others. Triptykos and the CEC center on three insights as theological grounds for this process. The first is that the compassion

⁷¹ Rogers, Yaconelli, and Dreitcer, *Practicing Compassion*, 20.

⁷² Rogers, *Compassion Practice*, 77.

⁷³ Rogers, Yaconelli, and Dreitcer, *Practicing Compassion*, 22.

⁷⁴ Rogers, Yaconelli, and Dreitcer, *Practicing Compassion*, 22.

of God is not limited to any particular beings but open to all of creation, and God's compassion permeates all of them. Second, since everyone is created in the image of God, each person has a compassionate being within his or her truest self. The third insight is that everyone suffers from interior movements that disturb connection with their truest selves and the compassionate God.⁷⁵ These three insights provide the understanding that our compassion extends to all creatures we encounter and reminds us to focus on cultivating compassion for others. In the light of these considerations, Triptykos and the CEC offer the PULSE of compassion for others with the same structure as the PULSE of compassion for oneself.

The final principle of Christian compassion is that "compassionate actions are ones that promote the easing of suffering and the flourishing of life for God, self, and others simultaneously."⁷⁶ When we are connected with the divine presence and our compassionate truest selves, we nurture compassion for ourselves and others. Moreover, emotions of compassion give rise to compassionate actions to alleviate suffering for oneself and others and move toward the flourishing of life in the fullness of compassionate living. In this respect, compassionate action occurs in three dimensions. First of all, compassionate action participates in God's activities and desires for healing and restoration of the world. Secondly, compassionate action engages in healing, restoration, and flourishing for oneself. Thirdly, compassionate action extends to healing, restoration, peace, forgiveness, and reconciliation for and with others. Thus, compassionate action coincides with the three dimensions of God, self, and others.⁷⁷

The Compassion Practice

Through integrating the six essential components and five core principles, Triptykos and the CEC have designed The Compassion Practice for nurturing our compassion. The

⁷⁵ Rogers, Yaconelli, and Dreitcer, *Practicing Compassion*, 23.

⁷⁶ Rogers, Yaconelli, and Dreitcer, *Practicing Compassion*, 24.

⁷⁷ Rogers, Yaconelli, and Dreitcer, *Practicing Compassion*, 25–26.

Compassion Practice is based on the radical way of Jesus and the pulse of God. It centers on restoring connection to the sacred, self, and others and is divided into four movements.⁷⁸

The first one is to “get grounded (or catch your breath).”⁷⁹ Getting grounded enables us to solidify our foundation. Rogers expresses this movement as “finding solid ground.”⁸⁰ In this stage, we distance ourselves from our strong feelings, thoughts, inner voices, drives, and impulses when we are overwhelmed by them. The best practice for distancing is to catch our breath, which hardens the ground. Moreover, through taking deep breaths, we are invited to restore our connection with a compassionate resource or our truest essence. The spiritual methods of getting grounded with the sacred can be very diverse according to individuals’ preferences: taking a walk, resting in silence, meditating, listening to music, and so on.⁸¹

The second practice is to take our PULSE (or cultivate self-compassion). When we are enmeshed in negative emotions, inner voices and monologues, drives, and impulses, we first cultivate compassion for ourselves by taking a “U” turn or turning inward after getting grounded to the divine presence or compassionate essence. Inner movements bring about our sufferings, but they are not our enemies; they are aspects to heal, care for, and pay attention to. Triptykos and the CEC emphasize that the compassion practice to nurture compassion for ourselves is to take our PULSE. The meanings of PULSE were delineated previously in the discussion of the six essential components. In sum, *P* means “paying attention” to our own internal movements without any judgment or prejudice. *U* signifies “understanding empathically” our inner movements, reflecting their fear, longing, aching, and gift. *L* refers to “loving with connectedness,” offering a compassionate heart and care toward any reactions or parts provoked

⁷⁸ Rogers, *Compassion Practice*, 31.

⁷⁹ Rogers, Yaconelli, and Dreitcer, *Practicing Compassion*, 26–27.

⁸⁰ Rogers, *Compassion Practice*, 32.

⁸¹ Rogers, *Compassion Practice*, 32.

from interior movements. *S* means “sensing the Sacredness” and inviting the compassionate Sacred into one’s suffering or inner parts. *E* refers to “embodying new life,” and desiring restoration of our humanity and flourishing in fullness within.⁸² Through taking our PULSE, we are invited to nurture self-compassion, which reconnects us with our compassionate resource and essence. Thus, our heart pulses in the heartbeat of God as compassion.

The third movement is to take others’ PULSE (or cultivate compassion for the other). When we are grounded with the sacred and connected with ourselves, we can cultivate compassion for others by taking their PULSE. However, when we nurture compassion for others, if our inner movements—such as rage, avoidance, and suffering—happen within us, we need to retake a “U” turn for ourselves. The reason is that inner parts or egos have something to listen for, heal, and care for. If we do not have any inner turbulences and our pulse is not erratic, it is a proper time to nurture compassion for others. The practice of PULSE for others is the same as for the self except that it is directed toward others. We first *pay attention* to the existence of another without any judgment or prejudice. When we see the humanity of another, we understand empathically his or her emotions, thoughts, and behaviors, reflecting on the other’s fears, longings, aches, and hidden gifts. Understanding empathically invites us to become an all-accepting presence toward another. We love with connectedness with another, extending care and compassion to the other’s suffering and flourishing. As we are connected with the suffering of another, compassion flows over and within us. At that time, we sense the Sacredness and our spiritual expansiveness. As a result, we are invited to embody new life, being free from the suffering of another and bringing about the flourishing of our life in the fullness of happiness.⁸³

The final stage is to “decide what to do” (or discern compassionate action). When we are

⁸² Rogers, *Compassion Practice*, 34.

⁸³ Rogers, *Compassion Practice*, 34–35.

deeply connected to the self and another in the grounding of the sacred, we engage in restorative actions for oneself and the other. Compassion leads us to decide what to do for freedom from suffering and for promoting life's flourishing. In this respect, Rogers emphasizes that we should discern compassionate action in two dimensions. The first is that compassionate action aims toward freedom from suffering and flourishing for ourselves. The second is that compassionate action extends healing, freedom, justice, and restoration to another.⁸⁴ Thus, compassionate action makes the humanity of ourselves and others alive and vibrant in the rhythm of the compassion of God's heart.

Practicing Compassion Curriculum

Triptykos and the CEC created a practical curriculum for learning compassion practices named, *Practicing Compassion: Following the Spiritual Path of Jesus*. I will explore the goals, structure, and flow of the curriculum.

Goals. *Practicing Compassion* aims to nurture compassion formation in all the dimensions of humanness, including skills, will, thoughts, emotions, and desires for compassionate living. The curriculum provides seven concrete goals. The first is to experience God as the essence of compassion. The second is to learn spiritual ways to reconnect with God whenever we are disconnected from God. Third, the curriculum enables one to discern, identify, distance from, and transform difficult emotions, drives, and inner voices. The fourth goal is to form self-compassion for compassionate living, and the fifth goal is to learn a practical way for genuine compassion toward loved ones, neutral persons, and even enemies. Sixth, the curriculum especially focuses on nurturing compassionate capacities and skills for dealing with a difficult person who has harmed us through connecting with a compassionate resource and our humanity and then discerning the humanity of the difficult person. The final goal is to decide what to do

⁸⁴ Rogers, *Compassion Practice*, 36–37.

for restorative action for oneself and others as well as social actions against injustice and violence, all with a compassionate heart.

Structure and flow. The *Practicing Compassion* curriculum provides twelve sessions for compassion formation, including “contemplative practices, inspiring stories, spiritual teachings, creative exercises, small group processes, and prayer opportunities designed to cultivate the threefold compassion of Jesus.”⁸⁵ The first session, “The Way of Radical Compassion: Practicing the Spiritual Path of Jesus,” introduces the threefold spiritual path of Jesus as the way of radical compassion: loving God, oneself, and others. It then provides “The Compassion Practice” as a way to nurture this threefold spirituality. The phases of the Practice are as follows: catch your breath, take your pulse, take their pulse, and decide what to do.⁸⁶ The second session, “The Compassionate Heart: Knowing Our Capacity to Love Others,” explains that our human nature is compassionate because we are created in the image of God, who is the essence of compassion. Moreover, it delineates the PULSE of compassion as containing the five essential components of Paying Attention, Understanding, Loving Connection, Sensing the Sacredness, and Embodying New Life.⁸⁷

The third session, “The Heartbeat of Infinite Compassion: The God that Jesus Knew,” provides a spiritual path to reconnect with God as a compassionate source and to maintain connection with God.⁸⁸ The fourth session, “Taking the ‘U’ Turn: Practicing Self-Compassion,” teaches that when we are disconnected from a compassionate source and our humanity, we should take a “U” turn to identify and distance ourselves from inner movements which cause

⁸⁵ Rogers, Yaconelli, and Dreitcer, *Practicing Compassion*, 6.

⁸⁶ Rogers, Yaconelli, and Dreitcer, *Practicing Compassion*, 31–50.

⁸⁷ Rogers, Yaconelli, and Dreitcer, *Practicing Compassion*, 51–76.

⁸⁸ Rogers, Yaconelli, and Dreitcer, *Practicing Compassion*, 77–95.

disconnection from God and the self in order to engage in self-compassion.⁸⁹ The fifth session, “Fears, Longings, Aching Wounds, and Stifled Gifts: Understanding the Suffering Within,” offers a radical teaching that interior movements occur from hidden wounds that need care and healing. Thus, the spiritual process for self-compassion is to recognize one’s inner fears, longings, aching wounds, and hidden gifts and to embrace them.⁹⁰

The sixth session, “Cultivating Compassion for Our Neighbors: Seeing Others as God’s Beloved,” reminds us to recognize that every human being has a capacity for compassion, since God as the essence of compassion created all humans in God’s image. Thus, this session offers a spiritual path for taking others’ PULSE to nurture genuine compassion for others.⁹¹ The seventh session, “Enemies as Spiritual Teachers: Practicing Self-Compassion When We Are Triggered,” cultivates self-compassion when inner movements occur within us by focusing on the difficult person who has harmed us. The activation of interior movements means that we have wounded parts to care for and heal in our inner world. In this respect, the enemy is considered a spiritual teacher. Thus, this session leads us to take a “U” turn toward what inner parts need and want and exercising a compassionate heart toward them.⁹²

The eighth session, “Loving Our Enemies: Cultivating Compassion for Those That Trigger Us,” provides a radical way to cultivate compassion toward the difficult person, recognizing that his or her offensive behaviors emerge from sufferings and wounds. Thus, it offers the rhythm of compassion of taking the others’ PULSE.⁹³ The ninth session, “In the Presence of Mine Enemies: Staying Grounded in God When People Trigger Us,” provides a compassion practice to connect with God in our real contexts, even when we are in the presence

⁸⁹ Rogers, Yaconelli, and Dreitcer, *Practicing Compassion*, 97–111.

⁹⁰ Rogers, Yaconelli, and Dreitcer, *Practicing Compassion*, 112–132.

⁹¹ Rogers, Yaconelli, and Dreitcer, *Practicing Compassion*, 133–155.

⁹² Rogers, Yaconelli, and Dreitcer, *Practicing Compassion*, 156–174.

⁹³ Rogers, Yaconelli, and Dreitcer, *Practicing Compassion*, 175–194.

of the difficult person.⁹⁴ The tenth session, “Praying for Those That Persecute You: Seeing Persons who Offend Us with Compassion,” invites us to participate in the difficult person’s suffering, which is hidden in the offensive behaviors, by taking the PULSE of his or her humanity.⁹⁵

The eleventh session, “Turning the Other Cheek: Putting Empowered Compassion into Action,” leads to compassionate action to resist the violence, oppression, and injustice of perpetrators. Moreover, compassionate action enables perpetrators to take accountability for their offensive behaviors as a result of compassionate hearts seeing their humanity.⁹⁶ The final session, “Embodying Love: Practicing a Compassionate Life,” summarizes the compassion practices again as the most essential components of all the sessions. We are encouraged to apply The Compassion Practice in our real contexts and the spheres of our lives where it is needed. Finally, we are asked to be messengers embodying compassion in a broken world through commissioning service.⁹⁷

The flow of each session includes a greeting, an opening prayer, the practice of Examen over the week, compassion groups, large group debriefing, teaching, an exercise or practices, a debriefing of the exercise, homework or a daily invitation, and a closing ritual.⁹⁸

⁹⁴ Rogers, Yaconelli, and Dreitcer, *Practicing Compassion*, 195–213.

⁹⁵ Rogers, Yaconelli, and Dreitcer, *Practicing Compassion*, 215–239.

⁹⁶ Rogers, Yaconelli, and Dreitcer, *Practicing Compassion*, 240–267.

⁹⁷ Rogers, Yaconelli, and Dreitcer, *Practicing Compassion*, 268–296.

⁹⁸ Rogers, Yaconelli, and Dreitcer, *Practicing Compassion*, 11–13.

Chapter 5

Formative Processes of Compassion Practices and Practical Principles for Formation and Training in Compassion in a Korean Congregation

I explored the definitions, issues, and various practices of compassion from Buddhist frameworks, secular fields, and Christian perspectives in Chapters 2 through 4. The various understandings of compassion will expand the spectrum of compassion and nurture its different paths.

This chapter will be divided into three parts. In the first part, I will compare and analyze meanings, issues, and practices of compassion through interactive conversations with Buddhist, secular, and some Christian resources. Then I will address the differences and similarities in regards to compassion in these sources. This work will help me to form and shape principles and methods of compassion practices for my congregation. In the second part, I will integrate important principles for cultivating compassionate living in my context. Finally, in the third part, I will create compassion practices for my congregation.

Comparison and Analysis of Understandings of Compassion in Buddhism, Secular Areas, and Christianity

The Meanings of Compassion

Buddhism defines compassion as the desire that all human beings be free from suffering and achieve happiness. The theoretical rationale for such a definition is that human beings have the right to be happy and to be free from suffering. The practical approach is to recognize that we are not separate beings but interdependent beings in the scheme of existence. This awareness leads us to desire that all human beings be free from suffering and be happy. In order to achieve freedom from suffering and happiness, Buddhism has explored understandings and causes of

suffering and practical ways to overcome suffering, such as the meditation of calm abiding from the Dalai Lama, Lojong practices, and Metta practice. In sum, all Buddhist theoretical approaches and practices focus on freeing people from their suffering and helping them achieve happiness.

In the scientific and social scientific perspectives, compassion is not defined as an idea or a concept. The reason is that compassion can be expressed in diverse dimensions. However, I have inferred four general meanings of compassion from various sources. The first meaning is participating in another's suffering. Paul Gilbert defines compassion as being open, sensitive, and responsive to the suffering of self and others without any defensive or judgmental views.¹ In terms of the second meaning, some scholars, including Lynn Underwood, David Graber, Maralynne Mitcham, and Hans-Werner Bierhoff, define compassion as participating in another's feelings.² The third definition is authentic connection with another's suffering and emotions.³ Fourth, compassion is defined as viewpoints and actions that require active participation in the suffering and feelings of another.⁴ The ultimate purpose of compassion according to these four meanings—participating in the sufferings and emotions of others, connecting with them, and actively getting involved in others' feelings and sufferings because of one's convictions—is to relieve the suffering of others in the formation of self-compassion. In other words, compassion is a way to free others from their suffering. Consequently, it results in achieving happiness in our lives. Diverse secular fields, such as physiology, psychology, family studies, genetics, and neuroscience, have explored understandings of human beings and how people develop

¹ Gilbert, "Introduction and Outline," 1.

² Underwood, "Compassionate Love: A Framework for Research," 9. Graber and Mitcham, "Compassionate Clinicians," 346. Bierhoff, "Psychology of Compassion and Prosocial Behaviour," 148.

³ Wang, "Conceptual Framework for Integrating Research Related to the Physiology of Compassion and the Wisdom of Buddhist Teachings," 104. Salena Brody et al., "Compassionate Love for Individuals in Other Social Groups," 285.

⁴ Underwood, "Compassionate Love: A Framework for Research," 4.

compassion. Many studies have found that the desire to alleviate others' suffering and increase others' happiness begins from compassion for the self. Thus, the studies have explored secure attachment in psychology, genes, caregiving systems, the physiological soothing and contentment system, a new brain and mind, and self-expansion model in the area of cognition. The ultimate goal of these studies is cultivating compassion for the self and others with the aim of freedom from suffering and happiness. In sum, the secular areas focus on understanding human beings themselves from different perspectives.

From a Christian perspective, Triptykos and the CEC aim to free people from suffering and to cultivate their flourishing in an inclusive sense. While Buddhism is much more interested in the causes and awareness of suffering and the secular areas focus on understandings of human beings, Triptykos and the CEC have various approaches for compassion formation. Triptykos centers on the threefold spirituality of loving God, self, and other. In order to free people from suffering and vitalize their lives, compassion is named as a spiritual way to connect one with a compassionate source, restore one into one's original humanity in the image of God, and cultivate compassion toward others. When I compare Triptykos's definition of compassion with Buddhism's and secular fields' definitions, the most distinct difference is the inclusion of connection with a divine or compassionate source. In Triptykos' perspective, connection with the Sacred is the precondition for compassion. Triptykos sees compassion as involving connection with the compassionate source, restoration of our authentic humanity, and bringing about the flourishing of others' lives.

Although the approaches to defining compassion are very diverse among these perspectives, they all include an understanding of compassion as the desire that human beings experience freedom from suffering and achieve happiness or the flourishing of life.

Sources of Suffering that Inhibit Compassion

To the extent that compassion can be defined as freeing people from suffering, this subsection is dedicated to what each perspective perceives the causes of suffering to be. In Buddhism, based on the work of the Dalai Lama, the causes of suffering are negative emotions and thoughts such as attachment, hatred, greed, jealousy, and pride. It seems that such emotions and thoughts bring about suffering within us. In the Lojong practice of Tibetan Buddhism, these emotions and thoughts emerge from self-centered and self-absorbed perspectives. Thus, the cessation of suffering can be viewed as a state of mind free from all negative emotions and thoughts.

In secular fields, the causes of suffering are traced to diverse sources. According to some psychologists, the basic cause of suffering is insecure attachment with attachment figures in early childhood. The person who experiences insecurity in relationship with attachment figures seeks more attention and care to satisfy his or her desires of intimacy with them. However, when such attention and care are not forthcoming, the person becomes more anxious and stressed, increasing his or her sense of insecurity. Finally, the insecure person does not know how to deal with personal distress and the causes of suffering. Thus, the person suffers in this situation. All human beings have an innate caregiving behavioral system that allows them to discern the feelings and needs of others. Attachment insecurity interrupts the activation of the caregiving behavioral system for developing a compassionate mind and behaviors.

From a physiological perspective, suffering emerges from the chronic and extreme activation of the threat and self-protection system that keeps people from harm and danger. In addition, suffering occurs as a result of the immoderate elevation of the incentive and resource-seeking system that seeks and acquires the resources for survival and flourishing. According to

Carl Jung and his successors, suffering emerges from extreme conflicts and confrontations between the conscious mind and the unconscious. The conflicts cause neurotic imbalances and emotional dysfunctions, which are signs that a person is suffering in his or her inner world. From the perspective of Internal Family Systems, people suffer due to the extreme roles of inner parts, loss of leadership of the Self, and imbalances among many parts. These elements trigger dysfunction and trouble in a person's inner life.

In relation to Triptykos, suffering emerges from inner movements that include "reactive emotions such as anger, fear, despair, and disgust; internal voices such as self-loathing, perfectionism, blame, or judgment; and behavioral impulses in unawareness."⁵ It seems that the fundamental causes of the activation of inner movements can be attributed to three elements. The first is disconnection with the divine presence. God is the source of compassion. When we are connected with the sacred, compassion flows within us and we experience personal healing, restoration, and flourishing. On the other hand, when we are disconnected from the divine presence, the compassionate core within us gradually disappears or dissipates. This will cause an inner movement within us. The second element is loss and deprivation of a person's original humanity. God as the essence of compassion created all beings in the image of God. All creatures pulsate with the rhythms of the compassionate heart of God. Thus, human beings have an inherent compassion to the extent that God created us. However, when we are disconnected from our truest selves, from our compassionate being-ness, by our busy lives and unawareness of our humanity, inner movements occur within us. In the cyclical structures, interior movements disturb connection with one's truest self and the compassionate God. The third element is disconnection from others. Uncomfortable relationships with others trigger inner movements to protect the self.

⁵ Rogers, Yaconelli, and Dreitcer, *Practicing Compassion*, 20.

In summary, Buddhism attributes the causes of suffering to negative emotions and thoughts in humans' inner worlds. Secular areas consider the causes of suffering to be neurotic imbalances, emotional dysfunctions, attachment insecurity, and discord in the inner world. Triptykos also sees the causes of suffering to be related to inner movements. However, the unique difference is that Triptykos finds suffering to be related to disconnection from the divine presence.

Approaches to Addressing Suffering

Buddhism, secular areas, and Christian perspectives have varying understandings of the causes of suffering. Likewise, each of the three areas has its own approaches and attitudes toward facing and dealing with suffering. There are differences and similarities in their approaches.

First, the three areas all emphasize that we should give attention to suffering, not avoid or deny it. Avoiding or denying suffering just provides temporary relief. The suffering happens within us again. Thus, focusing on suffering is a basic way to become free from the suffering.

Second, in order to look into suffering, the three areas posit that we distance ourselves from negative emotions, thoughts, inner voices, drives, and impulses without engaging in them. Buddhism encourages us to label and name negative emotions and thoughts in order to maintain a distance from them. These processes purify and distill the negative emotions. Buddhism especially emphasizes mindfulness in order to clear the mind overwhelmed by negative emotions and thoughts through breathing in and out. Lojong practice and Metta practice also focus on clearing the mind before engaging in compassion practices in order to detach ourselves from strong feelings. In the secular areas, Compassion Cultivation Training (CCT) explains that the first step is to still and settle the mind through two breathing meditation exercises called,

“cleansing breath” and “counting exercises,” in order to detach from negative emotions and thoughts. Compassionate Mind Training (CMT) also is designed to distance oneself from negative emotions and thoughts through mindful attention, called a “soothing breathing rhythm.” In the same way, Triptikos notes that we do not avoid inner movements that cause suffering, rather, we pay attention to them. The best practice for distancing from these inner movements is to catch a deep breath. The three areas point out that maintaining a distance from negative emotions and thoughts is the first step to freedom from suffering.

Third, Buddhism, the secular areas, and Christian perspectives stress having a clear awareness of sufferings. These perspectives argue that awareness of the suffering of oneself and others brings about the desire to be free from suffering and to bring about the flourishing of one’s own and others’ lives. Moreover, analyzing the causes of suffering liberates us from suffering. Buddhism asserts that recognizing and analyzing the causes of suffering in the present moment are the right way to overcome suffering. When we are aware of our suffering, compassion for ourselves comes to us. When we are aware of the suffering of another, compassion for that other arises for us. The awareness of our own and others’ suffering is the starting point for compassion formation. Moreover, the cessation of suffering can be attained through identifying and analyzing the causes of suffering. Thus, Buddhism cultivates awareness through mindfulness in the *Lojong* and *Metta* practices as the road of compassion because mindfulness allows us to see what is happening within us in the present moment.

In the secular arena, Paul Gilbert explains that the first step for compassion is awareness of the suffering of oneself or another. This awareness causes us to have a desire to relieve suffering.⁶ In this respect, Kristin Neff agrees with Gilbert. She delineates that the primary step

⁶ Gilbert, *Compassionate Mind*, xiii.

for learning compassion is accurate recognition of suffering and a desire to ease the suffering.⁷

Thus, Compassion Cultivation Training (CCT) highlights the cognitive and sympathetic awareness of suffering and the feelings of oneself and others. Underwood extends the dimension of awareness, explaining the importance of “accurate cognitive understanding of the situation, the other, and oneself.”⁸ This goes beyond recognizing the causes of suffering. It means we see our own dispositions and others’ needs in terms of suffering. Then we properly respond to the situation and make appropriate decisions to free oneself and others from suffering. The practice of Active Imagination agrees that awareness of suffering is essential. The reason is that the causes of suffering are extreme conflicts and confrontations between the conscious mind and the unconscious. Awareness of the powerful emotions that cause suffering enables us to put the conscious mind in dialogue with the unconscious. Thus, awareness is the first step for helping the conscious mind communicate with the unconscious in the work of compassion formation. In the Internal Family Systems (IFS) Model, awareness of the causes of suffering leads us to discover our extreme parts, the loss of leadership of the Self, and the imbalances among our many parts. Awareness is also the first step toward becoming free from suffering.

From the perspective of Triptykos, contemplative awareness is the first step for developing compassion. Triptykos names six components of compassion. The first is paying attention (or contemplative awareness) in order to become aware of inner movements within us without any distorted judgments or prejudices. Contemplative awareness allows us to discern inner movements without losing ourselves. Moreover, when we engage negative emotions, inner voices, monologue, drives, and impulses, the awareness of our inner movements allows us to detach from them and to become curious as to why these inner movements happen. However,

⁷ Neff, *Self-Compassion*, 10.

⁸ Underwood, “Compassionate Love: A Framework for Research,” 7.

Triptykos asserts that contemplative awareness is not a complete path to compassion.⁹

Fourth, the three areas have the same belief that we should concentrate on our sufferings and be aware of the sufferings of oneself and others. However, these areas have different approaches to dealing with negative emotions and thoughts that cause suffering. Buddhism emphasizes that all suffering emerges from negative emotions and thoughts. According to the Dalai Lama, negative emotions and thoughts within us are our real enemies to overcome.¹⁰ Moreover, he highlights a practice or meditation to eliminate negative emotions and thoughts, replacing them with positive qualities of mind. As the negative emotions and thoughts decrease, we cultivate positive emotions.¹¹ Even within Buddhism, there are different approaches to addressing negative emotions and thoughts. In Tibetan Buddhism, the *Lojong* practice focuses on familiarizing oneself with negative emotions and thoughts and cultivating positive qualities. The difference between the Dalai Lama and the *Lojong* practice is that the *Lojong* practice advocates befriending and embracing negative emotions and thoughts. After all, the *Lojong* practice aims to lessen them and to nurture positive qualities of mind. However, Triptykos disagrees with this Buddhist approach. Triptykos stresses that negative emotions and thoughts that bring about suffering are not our enemies.¹² Rather, they are understood as the cries of inner movements hidden within us. Thus, Triptykos suggests taking a “U” turn or turning inward to care for and listen to the pain or cries of the negative emotions and thoughts. As a practical method for taking a “U” turn, Triptykos provides the PULSE of compassion: (P)aying attention, (U)nderstanding, (L)oving with connection, (S)ensing the Sacredness, and (E)mbracing new life.¹³ Especially in the “understanding empathetically” step of the PULSE of the Compassion Practice, we listen

⁹ Rogers, *Compassion Practice*, 79.

¹⁰ Dalai Lama, *Heart of Compassion*, 85.

¹¹ Dalai Lama, *Heart of Compassion*, 20–21.

¹² Rogers, Yaconelli, and Dreitcer, *Practicing Compassion*, 21.

¹³ Rogers, Yaconelli, and Dreitcer, *Practicing Compassion*, 22.

with an all-accepting presence to the cries of inner movements that are reflecting the fear, longing, aching wounds, and hidden gifts of negative emotions and thoughts. Thus, Triptykos sees that the PULSE of compassion is a spiritual way to cultivate compassion, free people from suffering, and bring about the flourishing of our lives.

In summary, while the approach of Buddhism is to lessen negative emotions and thoughts, the way of Triptykos understands negative emotions and thoughts as cries or pains hidden within inner movements. Thus, the negative emotions and thoughts need to be cared for and healed. In secular areas, the Active Imagination method and IFS theory agree with Triptykos' approach rather than Buddhism's. The methodology of Active Imagination considers negative emotions and thoughts to be the cries of the unconscious. The negative emotions and thoughts are understood as some parts of ourselves different from the conscious mind. Thus, Active Imagination enables painful parts in the unconscious to come up as images. Then one begins to communicate with such images about what they want and need and how they are hurting. Active Imagination also aims not to eradicate negative emotions and thoughts but to care for and heal them through its techniques. IFS has the same perspective as Active Imagination and Triptykos.

Entities Needed for Compassion Formation

As I have explored compassion formation in three areas, I have been primarily interested in what leads to freedom from suffering and human flourishing. The three areas recognize specific entities that are important to compassion formation. In Buddhism, the basic cause of suffering is related to the mind. True happiness and freedom from suffering depend on the mind. Thus, the entity needed to deal with sufferings is the mind. In this respect, Buddhism calls a *bodhicitta* an awakening mind that can form compassion. Trainings of the mind are considered means to compassion formation, e.g., mindfulness and calm abiding meditation. *Lojong* also

means “training mind” and is practiced to awaken dormant minds. In the secular areas, Gilbert calls the necessary entity “the new brain and mind”¹⁴ that has reflective, imaginative, and creative abilities for compassion. Some scholars see the new brain and mind controlling psychological and physiological systems, such as the caregiving behavioral system and the soothing-contentment system. Thus, Compassionate Mind Training (CMT) promotes compassionate attention and compassionate reasoning and thinking for compassion formation. In Active Imagination, the entity that is required is the conscious ego as inner witness and observer to the encounter and dialogue with the images of the unconsciousness. In the IFS Model, when the Self is in the seat of consciousness and has self-leadership in which all parts trust the Self, we can be liberated from our sufferings, such as the extreme activation of parts. Thus, the practical exercises of IFS enable the Self to come into consciousness and to have self-leadership. For Triptykos, the entity that forms compassion is the true self that is created by God. The true self is inherently compassionate because God as the essence of compassion created all people. Thus, when we are connected with the true self as our compassionate humanity, we are free from suffering and flourish.

Compassion Formation through Complex Interactions of Human Capacities

Compassion is not just a feeling or emotion. Compassion emerges from various interactions of human capacities. The three areas I have analyzed also agree with this proposition. However, there are different components in the three areas. Buddhism mostly posits that compassion emerges from the interaction of mind, emotion, and body. For instance, when we are held by a negative mind, it brings about negative emotions and the tension of the physical body. On the other hand, when we feel compassionate emotions, a compassionate mind and a relaxed physical state appear. Thus, the three dimensions affect each other and compassion emerges from

¹⁴ Gilbert, *Compassionate Mind*, 181.

their interactions. In addition, Buddhist Metta practice adds the interactions of intention, attention, and motivation along with mind, emotion, and body.¹⁵

Triptykos acknowledges that compassion emerges from a complex interaction of human capacities. In this respect, Triptykos observes that “compassion is an experiential gestalt, a holistic complex that involves and integrates the full range of human capacities—perception, emotion, cognition, physiology, motivation, and behavior.”¹⁶

The scientific and social scientific perspectives emphasize a more wide-ranging interaction of human capacities for the processes of compassion formation. Gilbert argues that compassion emerges from the interaction of complex components, such as intentions, emotions, cognitions, and behaviors.¹⁷ Beverley Fehr and Susan Sprecher agree with Gilbert, explaining that compassion occurs through diverse interactions of aspects such as cognition, emotion, behavior, and motivation.¹⁸ Compassion Cultivation Training likewise posits that compassion arises from the interaction of various components: cognitive awareness, intention, motivation, and empathetic concern.¹⁹ Some scholars in the scientific and social scientific areas delineate that compassion emerges from the complex interaction of genes, physiological systems, psychologies, early experiences, the new brain and mind, and social ecologies.²⁰ Thus, fields of study in the secular arena have inclusive understandings of how compassion emerges.

The Process of the Compassion Practice

Christopher Germer, a clinical psychologist, asserts that “self-compassion is the foundation of compassion for others.”²¹ When we feel and embrace our own pain, we are able to

¹⁵ Germer, *Mindful Path to Self-Compassion*, 162.

¹⁶ Rogers, Yaconelli, and Dreitcer, *Practicing Compassion*, 17.

¹⁷ Gilbert, “Introduction and Outline,” 1.

¹⁸ Fehr and Sprecher, “Compassionate Love: Conceptual, Measurement, and Relational Issues,” 31.

¹⁹ Thupten Jinpa, *Compassion Cultivation Training Program*, 1

²⁰ See 30-42 in my dissertation.

²¹ Germer, *Mindful Path to Self-Compassion*, 3.

be aware of other' suffering and have a compassionate heart. Thus, compassion for others and the world is built on a foundation of self-compassion. The three areas I have been studying mostly agree with Germer. In Buddhism, *Metta* practice is divided into five or six stages according to the objects for loving-kindness. According to Sharon Salzberg, there are six groups of objects for loving-kindness: ourselves, a benefactor, beloved friends, a neutral person, a difficult person, and all beings.²² Compassion for others begins from loving-kindness for oneself. Germer also provides six stages of *Metta* practice for ourselves, a benefactor, friends, a neutral person, a difficult person, and finally, all beings.²³ In this respect, Buddhism posits that compassion for oneself is the foundation of cultivating compassion for others.

Triptykos also emphasizes that we first nurture compassion for ourselves by taking our "PULSE." Then we can cultivate compassion for others by taking their "PULSE." Compassion for others flows within us when we are connected with ourselves. Genuine compassion for others includes loved ones, neutral persons, and even enemies. In the secular area, Compassion Cultivation Training (CCT) is carried out in six steps over an eight-week course: settling mind, loving-kindness and compassion for a loved one, loving-kindness and compassion for oneself, establishing the basis for compassion toward others, cultivating compassion toward others, and active compassion practice. The order of the objects for compassion in CCT is a little different from *Metta* practice and Triptykos. CCT begins with loving-kindness and compassion for a loved one. The reason is that we can easily cultivate positive emotions such as warmth, loving-kindness, empathy, and compassion while meditating on a loved one. Then we are able to move to cultivating compassion for ourselves through applying the positive emotions or feelings achieved by cultivating compassion for a loved one. CCT also posits that loving-kindness and

²² Salzberg, "Metta: The Practice of Compassion," 58–60.

²³ Germer, *Mindful Path to Self-Compassion*, 167–68.

compassion for oneself are prerequisites for loving-kindness and compassion for others, including strangers and even enemies.

In summary, the three areas understand that loving-kindness and compassion for others emerges from compassion for oneself. In addition, compassion for oneself is extended to loved ones, neutral people, difficult persons, and all beings.

Practical Principles for Compassion Formation and Compassion Practices

In the first part of this chapter I have compared and analyzed the meanings, issues, understandings, and practices of compassion in relation to Buddhism, secular areas, and Christian perspectives. This work has led me to discover practical principles and ways to cultivate compassionate living in my perspective and for my congregation. This part will address these principles and methods grounded on a compassion practice from a Christian perspective. In this part, I do not try to create a completely new compassion practice, but instead, I apply important and core principles obtained from the three areas to a compassion practice for my congregation based on my perspective. Thus, I will briefly explain the meanings, core principles, and methods for forming compassion in relation to my approach to compassion formation.

The Meaning of Compassion

People in Korean Society are suffering in their personal and communal lives. The suffering includes personal and internal pains as well as pains caused by relationships with others and social structures. A person who is suffering produces more suffering in relationship to others, without any healing or restoration. The continued production of suffering in personal and communal lives gradually brings about a broken and violent world. Therefore, we need to cultivate compassion in order to break the continued cycle of suffering in our lives and to bring us to live as compassionate beings. I accept the inclusive meaning of compassion provided by the

three areas studied. Thus, I also define compassion as the desire that all human beings be free from suffering and that their lives flourish in compassionate living.

The Causes and Approaches to Suffering

I analyzed the causes of suffering according to the three areas above. A diversity of causes was noted. They included negative emotions and thoughts, attachment insecurity, the chronic and extreme activation of the threat and self-protection system, the immoderate elevation of the incentive and resource-seeking system, extreme conflicts and confrontations between the conscious mind and the unconscious, the extreme roles of parts, the loss of leadership of the Self, and the imbalance of many inner parts. As I examined these causes of suffering, I discovered that the true cause of suffering emerges from disconnection with the Sacred, including the divine, truest Self, and others. Disconnection from the sacred causes interior, physical, and psychologically extreme reactions that are the causes of suffering. Such phenomena bring about suffering. Moreover, my understanding, which is based on Triptykos' perspective, is that the Sacred includes God, the truest Self, and others. God is a sacred and compassionate being. Insofar that God created all human beings, I and others are also sacred and compassionate existences. Thus, disconnection from the sacred, including God, the Self, and others, causes the sufferings within us.

In terms of approaches to suffering, I agree with the perspective from the three areas that we should not avoid our sufferings or simply act out our sufferings, but we should concentrate on them. When we examine our sufferings, we are on the way to being free from them. However, focusing on our sufferings is not to engage with them. As we distance ourselves from negative emotions, thoughts, inner voices, drives, and impulses, we observe what is happening to us in the present moment. In order to maintain distance from our sufferings and enter a road of

compassion, the three areas propose mindfulness, breathing in and out, or catching our breath in diverse forms in order to clear and settle the mind overwhelmed by inner movements. In this way, our mind becomes a vacuum in which to connect with the sacred. This spiritual way becomes an entry to the road of compassion. Moreover, awareness of suffering and its causes is the first step toward cultivating compassion for ourselves and others. Awareness of suffering in one's own and others' lives elicits the desire or motivation to free everyone from suffering. The awareness of its causes directs us in how to respond to them.

Concerning the spiritual way to deal with inner movements, such as negative emotions, thoughts, impulses, drives, and inner voices, I disagree in part with the perspective of Buddhism about lessening sufferings and nurturing positive qualities of mind. I agree that we need to nurture positive qualities for compassion formation. However, I disagree with the method for lessening negative emotions and thoughts. The reason is that Buddhism posits that negative emotions and thoughts are our enemies. I entirely accept the approaches of Triptykos, Active Imagination, and IFS. They posit that inner movements are not our enemies but cries hidden within us to listen to, care for, and heal. Thus, an important and core principle for dealing with inner movements is to encounter the unconscious or extreme parts by taking a "U" turn or turning inward as described in the work of Triptykos.

Triptykos, Active Imagination, and IFS personify the inner movements as images or forms as the first step of turning inward. In this stage, we observe or pay attention to what is happening within us. The second step is to dialogue with the images or the forms, asking why they are activated, what they are afraid of, and what they desire. The dialogue with inner movements begins in the connection with the compassionate source or the divine. The third step is to invite a compassionate resource like Jesus Christ into the dialogue between the truest Self

and the inner movements for healing and restoration. After listening to the dialogue between the Self and the inner movements, the divine or Jesus Christ sees the inner movements with an empathic and compassionate heart, without any judgment or prejudice. Or the divine hugs or embraces the inner movements in the imagination, providing healing and restoration. The fourth step is an inner ritual or prayer for compassionate living with oneself and others. In this stage, we decide to live a new compassionate life. These steps for the encounter with inner movements enable us to restore our connection with the sacred.

Entities and Complex Interactions for Compassion Formation

I agree with the opinion of the three areas that there is an entity that leads to compassion formation. Buddhism sees the entity as the awakening mind; for Paul Gilbert it is the new brain and mind; Active Imagination has the conscious ego; IFS's entity is the Self as the seat of consciousness; and Triptykos points to the true Self in the presence of God. I also see the Self as an active and compassionate entity for nurturing compassion. In my understanding, since God is the sacred entity, the Self is a sacred core created by God. Triptykos considers humanity to be compassionate beings because God is the essence of compassion. Thus, the Self also has a compassionate character. IFS understands the qualities of the Self to be calmness, clarity, curiosity, compassion, confidence, courage, creativity, and connectedness.²⁴ In this respect, I assert that the Self has many qualities for forming compassion. Moreover, I posit that compassion emerges from the complex interaction of various human capacities. I have a comprehensive understanding of the interaction of various components. As proposed by the three areas, the components include intentions, motivations, emotions, cognitions, and behaviors as well as genes, physiological systems, the new brain and mind, and social ecologies.

²⁴ Schwartz, *Introduction to the Internal Family Systems Model*, 33–48.

Practical Compassion Practices for a Korean Congregation

I will describe an eight-week course of compassion practices to nurture compassionate living within a Korean congregation. Compassion practices will be a spiritual way to restore connection with the sacred, including God, the Self, and others. I premise that all causes of suffering emerge from disconnection with the Sacred. The Sacred consists of God, the Self, and others. In this course, the compassion practices of the first and second weeks are spiritual ways to connect with God as a compassionate source. The practices focus on experiencing the presence of God in our daily lives. The compassion practices during weeks three and four concentrate on a spiritual way to restore connection with the Self in the seat of consciousness. The purposes of the practices are to become aware of inner movements that happen within us and to nurture compassion for them, grounding oneself in the compassionate God. The compassion practices of weeks five through eight focuses on nurturing compassion for others, including loved ones, a neutral person, and even enemies who have hurt us.

The flow of each week's session includes six procedures. The first procedure is "getting grounded" with the divine or God through breathing in and out. While breathing in and out, we become aware of our breathing patterns. When breathing in and out is natural and comfortable to us, we try to feel the presence of God or the divine in the present moment. It is as if we feel the respiration of God or the divine. When we feel connected with the divine or God through breathing in and out, a spiritual leader begins with an opening prayer. This procedure aims to ground persons with the divine or God.

The second procedure is "spiritual awareness" of the Sacred, including God, Self, and others, through the Prayer of Examen. The aim of this procedure is to discern the presence of God, who is present with us. In the presence of God, we become aware of suffering caused by

disconnection with the divine, and in the first and second weeks, the procedure cultivates an experience of encounter with the divine. In the third through eighth weeks, spiritual awareness concentrates on inner movements, including thoughts, emotions, desires, impulses, and inner voices, that bring about suffering in our lives and on connection with God.

The third procedure is “teaching” based on compassion practices or exercises, including the breathing in and out exercise, the Examen Prayer, some forms of prayer with scriptures and imagination, practices of discerning inner movements, and practices of compassionate understanding of a loved one, a neutral person, and difficult persons.

The fourth procedure is “encountering the Sacred” in the scriptures through imagination. The practice includes reading the Bible and imagining the story (thus embodying us into the biblical story), sensing the presence of the divine, and allowing the flow of the grace and presence of the divine into our body, soul, and spirit. The practice guides us to become characters of the Bible who participate in processes of healing and restoration.

The fifth procedure is “sharing the sacred experiences” with others. As we share our insights, experiences, questions, and challenges, it will reinforce our experiences and insights.

The final procedure is “invitation to compassionate actions.” In each session, we are invited into compassionate actions to connect with the Sacred. The compassionate actions include alleviating suffering for oneself and others and bringing about human flourishing in the fullness of compassionate living. We decide what to do through closing prayer (*Metta* prayer), declaring our determination to act.

The First Session (Restoring Sacred Encounter with God or the Divine)

The first session focuses on restoring connection with God or the divine. Disconnection from the divine causes suffering within us. Thus, when we are connected with the divine, we will

nurture our lives toward compassionate living. The first session is designed to facilitate reflection on sacred encounters with the divine in the past and to nurture such feelings and inspiration in the present moment.

Before the first procedure, a spiritual director encourages the participants to create a sacred place and time for themselves, saying the following: “When we create a personal time and place for connecting with God in our daily lives, we deepen our relationship with the sacred, including God, the Self, and others. Jesus also had his sacred places and times to pray, such as on the mountain, by the sea, and in Gethsemane.” (1) Find your own sacred place (for example, your living room, a garden, promenade, library, or church). (2) To make your sacred place meaningful for your personal prayer time, add objects or images such as a Bible, cross, candle, incense, or wisdom figure. (3) Decide on a regular time in your daily life for prayer. (4) Set up your sacred time and place so as not to be disturbed (for example, turn your cell phone off, lock the door, and set an alarm).

Getting Grounded. While the participants breathe in and out, they focus on their breathing patterns. When breathing in and out is natural and comfortable to them, they seek to feel the presence of God or the divine in the present moment. The spiritual leader reads Genesis 2:7: “The LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.” While the participants are aware of their breathing patterns, they imagine God breathing in and out of their nostrils. They sense that their breathing in and out emerges from the respiration of God or the divine. When they are attentive to God or the divine being with them in the present moment through their breathing in and out, the spiritual leader gives an opening prayer, saying, “May we feel Your pulse, may we be with You, and may we stay in Your presence. In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.”

Spiritual Awareness. In spiritual awareness, the participants discern the presence and activities of God in their past lives through the Examen Prayer. The goal of spiritual awareness is to cultivate the presence of the divine in the present moment through reflecting on feelings and inspiration given by the presence of the divine in the past. The process of spiritual awareness is as follows: First, the spiritual director leads the participants to reflect on diverse moments or events or any given day in their lives. Second, they reflect on when they discerned the presence of the divine in those diverse moments. Third, they reflect on any feelings, thoughts, perceptions, will, and inspiration in the moments. These steps form a process of paying attention to their lives through breathing in and out. Fourth, they share their experiences, insights, and challenges with each other.

Teaching. This is a lesson on the prayer or exercise of “breathing in and out.” The reason for this lesson is that most Korean Christians are not familiar with this practice. The participants learn the importance and necessity of breathing in and out to thrive in their lives. The lesson teaches that breathing in and out brings about a distancing of ourselves from inner movements and helps us pay attention to what is happening within us. Distancing and paying attention through breathing in and out enables them to discern the presence and pulse of God in the present moment.

Encountering the Sacred. This practice embodies the moments reflected on in *spiritual awareness* through imagination in detail. It summons the feelings and inspirations of the past times into the present moment. The first step is to “embody us into the sacred moment.” The spiritual director asks the participants to recall a moment they experienced the presence of the divine by asking the following questions: “When was that moment in your life? Where were you in that moment? Who were you with? What did you see or hear or smell or taste? What did you

feel?” The second step is to “sense the presence of the divine” in the present moment. Thus, the spiritual director leads the participants to bring their past feelings and inspiration into the present moment. The third step is “welcome the flow of the grace and presence of the divine into our bodies, souls, and spirits,”

Sharing the Sacred Experiences. The participants share their spiritual experiences, insights, and challenges from the procedures of breathing in and out, spiritual awareness, and the encounter with the divine with one another. When they participate in sharing with each other, more sacred experiences happen in the group and the participants’ sense of the Sacred is increased.

Invitation to Compassionate Actions. The participants decide what to do in their daily lives as compassionate actions. These are things they feel invited to do through the sacred encounter or the presence of the divine. While breathing in and out, they pray for what the compassionate actions in their lives will be. Then they have an ending prayer, saying, “May we be with you, God; may we stay in Your presence; and may we fulfill our compassionate actions in Your presence.”

The Second Session (Nurturing Connection with God or the Divine)

While the first session focuses on restoring the sacred encounter with God, the second session aims to nurture the connection with God or the divine, reflecting the presence of God or the divine in the present moment.

Getting Grounded. The cleansing breath exercise, provided by Compassion Cultivation Training, will be used in *getting grounded with the divine*. The participants breathe in and out with their natural rhythm. When the rhythm of breathing in and out is natural, they visualize cleansing the inner movements (such as negative emotions, thoughts, and inner voices) within

them that are overwhelming them. The special attention in this exercise is not to eradicate the inner movements, but to distance themselves from them. The participants take a deep cleansing breath several times until it is natural. When the spiritual leader reads Genesis 2:7, as in the first session, the participants are just trying to sense the pulse of God in the present moment. They visualize that God exhales into their nostrils. When it seems that they are feeling the presence of the divine or God in the present moment, a spiritual leader begins the opening prayer: “May we feel Your pulse, may we be with You, and may we stay in Your presence. In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.”

Spiritual Awareness. Spiritual awareness in the second session cultivates the presence of God through the Examen Prayer much more. Moreover, it helps the participants to discern when they are connected with or disconnected from God. The Examen for spiritual awareness is more concrete and detailed than the spiritual awareness of the first session. (1) The participants keep breathing in and out as in getting grounded. (2) They feel a sense of being grateful and give thanks to God for God’s grace and blessings given to them in the past. (3) They ask the divine or God to be with them in their spiritual awareness. (4) They reflect on the past week or a given day or event or experience. (5) They review whom they talked with, where they were, and what they were doing in those moments. (6) They reflect on how and where God or the divine was present with them. (7) They discern emotions, feelings, and thoughts, such as joy, peace, love, compassion, hope, freedom, awe, and inspiring energies when the divine or God was present with them. (8) They reflect on a time when they were far away from the divine or God. Are there any such moments? Then they discern what their emotions, feelings, and thoughts were at that time, such as anger, anxiety, worry, tension, fear, and desire. (10) While they reflect on these moments, they pray to the divine or God for help if they need it. (11) They ask that they remain

in God's presence and grace in their lives, now and in the future. (12) They pray to God with a heart full of gratitude.

Teaching. There are two exercises to cultivate the presence of the divine: praying with scripture and Conversing with the Divine in the Imagination. The first exercise is the spiritual method by which the participants enter a scriptural story and become real characters in the scenes of the story. This spiritual method helps them to sense the presence of God. The exercise is as follows: (1) Choose a story in the scriptures and read it dramatically. (2) Read the same story again but slowly. In this step, the participants read a sentence, pause for a while, and imagine the story. (3) The participants close their eyes and use their imaginations to engage in the story. They visualize the scene and its sounds, smells, and main characters and go deeply into the story. (4) The participants sense the presence of the divine, reflecting on their conversation with the main characters, the mood, and the teachings in the story.

The second exercise, Conversing with the Divine in the Imagination, nurtures intimacy and connection with the divine. (1) The participants visualize a comfortable and safe place in their imaginations. (2) They invite the divine-like Jesus Christ, the Christ whom the participants desire, into that place through their imaginations. (3) They visualize that the divine is walking to them in their safe place. Then they imagine the facial expressions, gestures, and tone of voice of the divine. (4) They give thanks for the presence of the divine and converse with the divine through asking questions and listening to the divine. (5) After they sense the presence of the divine, they imagine that the divine is leaving. (6) The participants return to their current, conscious location. These exercises enable participants to naturally enter into the next step of Encountering the Sacred in the scriptures. Moreover, they are invited to experience healing and restoration in the presence of the divine.

Encountering the Sacred. The goal of this practice is to experience connection with the divine through participating in a biblical story as a character using the imagination. First of all, the participants repeat breathing in and out until it is natural. They feel the pulse and presence of the divine through breathing in and out. In “reading the scripture with imagination,” a spiritual leader tells participants the story of the death of Lazarus from John 11:1-44. The participants visualize the story in their imaginations. In “embodying us into the story,” the participants use their imaginations to become the character of the dead Lazarus in his tomb. When the participants have entered into that character, the spiritual director asks some questions: How do you feel? What do you see? What do you hear? What do you smell? What do you feel physically? What do you desire? In “sensing the presence of the divine,” as the dead Lazarus comes back to life through the presence, tears, and words of Jesus Christ, the participants feel the presence, tears, and words of Jesus Christ or the divine who is looking at them as at the dead Lazarus, with a compassionate heart and mind. The spiritual leader offers some questions to guide the imagining of the story: What is your encounter with the divine or Jesus Christ like in the story? What is the divine who revives the dead Lazarus telling you? How does Jesus Christ respond to you? How do you feel in this moment? In “welcoming the flow of the grace and presence of the divine into our bodies, souls, and spirits,” the spiritual director asks the participants what their gifts are in the encounter with the divine or Jesus Christ and in the presence of God. While they are reflecting on the gifts and grace they have received, the spiritual director leads them to welcome the flow of grace and gifts into their spirits, souls, and bodies. They are full of the grace, gifts, and presence of the divine.

Sharing the Sacred Experiences. The participants share the spiritual experiences, insights, and challenges they had in the procedures of breathing in and out, spiritual awareness, and the

encounter with the divine with one another. When they participate in sharing with each other, more sacred experiences occur in the group and the participants' sense of the Sacred is increased.

Inviting Us into Compassionate Actions. The participants decide what to do in their daily lives in terms of compassionate actions they have been invited to through the sacred encounter or the experience of the presence of the divine. While breathing in and out, they pray to know what the compassionate actions in their lives ought to be. Then they have an ending prayer, saying, "May we be with you, God; may we stay in Your presence; and may we fulfill our compassionate actions in Your presence."

The Third Session (Discerning the Inner Movements within Us)

The third session is designed to guide participants to discern the inner movements within them. Awareness of inner movements leads to freedom from suffering and to the flourishing of our lives. Thus, this session's goal is to discern what happens within us.

Getting Grounded. While the participants breathe in and out, they sense the presence of the divine. When the spiritual director reads Genesis 2:7, they also inhale and exhale, imagining the pulse of God. When they connect with the divine, they pay attention to what is happening to them without any judgment or prejudice. The spiritual director leads the opening prayer: "May we feel Your pulse; may we be with You; and may we stay in Your presence. In Jesus Christ we pray, amen."

Spiritual Awareness. After the participants get grounded with the divine, they begin the procedure of spiritual awareness through the practice of Examen provided in the Spiritual Awareness section of the second session. However, the most important thing in this session is that the participants discern the inner movements that have happened within them as they reflect on recent past days or events or experiences. The spiritual director leads them to discern their

inner movements as follows: (1) While reflecting on the past few days or recent events or experiences, what were your emotions and thoughts in the moment? (2) Were you peaceful or worried? Were you anxious, angry, or uncomfortable? (3) Focus on your inner movements, such as inner voices, desires, negative emotions and thoughts, and impulses that overwhelmed you. (4) In your imagination, make the inner movements within you into a concrete image or images. (5) Reflect on the presence of the divine with you even as you were overwhelmed by these inner movements. (6) Pray to the divine or God if you need any help from the divine. (7) Ask the divine to be with you in your life, now and in the future. (8) Pray to God with a heart full of gratitude.

Teaching. The third session aims to discern inner movements with the goal of becoming free from sufferings and bringing about the flourishing of our lives. Thus, we need to understand why inner movements happen within us. In this lesson, the Internal Family Systems Model (IFS) will be introduced to the participants. IFS enables them to discern the existence of many parts in their inner worlds and to recognize inner movements as cries or pains hidden in the parts. Moreover, it helps them to consider inner movements as not their enemies, but as many parts needing to be cared for and healed. This lesson on IFS invites them to connect with the Self.

Encountering the Sacred in Scripture. This practice is dedicated to discerning inner movements while engaging in a scriptural story through the imagination. While the participants breathe in and out, they feel connected with the divine or God. In “reading the scripture with imagination,” the spiritual leader reads Mark 4:35-41, named, “Jesus Calms the Storm,” one time. Then the spiritual leader reads one sentence at a time, pausing after each one and inviting the participants to experience the story with their five senses. In “embodying us into the story,” the participants enter into and become a character in the story. The spiritual leader leads the practice

as follows: (1) While we live our busy lives, wild storms, winds, and waves unexpectedly strike us. Gales of anger and rage sometimes come to us. Storms of worry and anxiety stir within us. Waves of self-criticism sometimes wash over us. (2) Reflect on a storm, wind, or wave that has occurred in your life. Did any emotions and thoughts swirl or overwhelm you? (3) Connecting with how the disciples of Jesus Christ responded with fear to the winds and waves of a storm, how did you respond when you experienced inner movements like raging winds, storms, and waves? (4) Reflect on your facial expressions, emotions, thoughts, and behaviors. (5) We may have felt angry, anxious, or afraid of the forces within us. (6) Now we imagine that Jesus Christ, who was sleeping on a cushion in the stern of the boat, gets up and says to our inner movements, “Quiet. Be still,” “Quiet. Be still.” (7) We feel the storm, winds, and waves swirling within us becoming calm, still, quiet, and peaceful. In “sensing the presence of the divine,” we sense the presence of Jesus Christ with a compassionate heart who makes our inner movements calm, still, and quiet. How does Jesus Christ come to us? What does Jesus Christ say to us? How does Jesus Christ behave for us? Sense the presence of Jesus Christ. In “welcoming the flow of grace and gifts into our spirits, souls, and bodies,” we stay in the grace and presence of Jesus Christ, and we allow Christ’s grace and gifts to flourish within us and flow into our bodies, souls, and spirits.

Sharing the Sacred Experiences. The participants share the sacred experiences, insights, and challenges they have encountered in the previous procedures with each other.

Invitation to Compassionate Actions. The participants are invited to engage in compassionate actions to further their connection with the sacred, including God and the Self. They decide what to do in their daily lives for healing and restoration. Finally, they pray, “May we be with you, God; may we stay in Your presence; and may we fulfill our compassionate actions in Your presence.”

The Fourth Session (Conversing with the Inner Movements within Us)

The fourth session focuses on conversing with the inner movements within us, after discerning them in the third session. Inner movements are the cries or pains of the many parts of the unconscious. Conversing with our inner movements helps us to understand their sufferings, needs, wants, and fears with compassionate hearts. Moreover, this practice leads us to connect with the Self in compassionate living.

Getting Grounded. For participants who live busy lives, breathing in and out is very important for their compassion practice. Counting exercises of breathing in and out, provided by Compassion Cultivation Training (CCT), will be introduced to them. The counting exercise aims to maintain a settled and stilled mind. Participants count each cycle of breathing in and out until they reach five. After finishing one set of five, they go back to one and count to five again, repeating this cycle several times. After they distance themselves from their over-activated inner movements, they sense the presence of the divine. They listen to Genesis 2:7 read by the spiritual director and imagine the pulse of God. When they feel connected with the divine, they do the opening prayer: “May we feel Your pulse; may we be with You, God; and may we stay in Your presence. In Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.”

Spiritual Awareness. In the spiritual awareness section of the third session, the participants were led to discern inner movements happening within them. In this session, they also discern inner movements and converse with them through reflecting on the past 24 hours. The most important thing in this practice is that they first discern the presence of the divine. Thus, the spiritual director leads them to discern and to converse with their inner movements in connection with the divine as follows: (1) While reflecting on the past 24 hours, what were your emotions and thoughts throughout the day? (2) Focus on inner movements, such as inner voices,

desires, negative emotions and thoughts, and impulses that overwhelmed you. (3) Say to yourself, “I feel [inner movements].” (4) In your imagination, make the inner movements within you into a concrete image or images. (5) Converse with the image or images without any judgment or prejudice. (6) Include in the conversation the following: What made the image or images happen within you? Why are the image or images overwhelming you? What are their fears? What do they want and need? (7) Listen to them empathically and seek to understand them. (8) Pray to the divine or God if the movements need any help from the divine. (7) Invite the divine to be within you or your parts in your life, now and in the future. (8) Pray to God with a heart full of gratitude.

Teaching. The fourth session is dedicated to discerning inner movements as well as to conversing with them for healing and restoration of the Self. In the lesson, participants learn PULSE, the six components of the Compassion Practice designed by Triptykos and the Center for Engaged Compassion (CEC): Paying attention, Understanding, Loving connection, Sensing the Sacredness, Embodying new life. In particular, in learning about PULSE, participants practice listening to the cries of their inner movements and reflect on the fears, longings, aching wounds, and hidden gifts of their negative emotions and thoughts with an all-accepting presence. The PULSE of the Compassion Practice invites participants to heal their sufferings and to connect with the Self.

Encountering the Sacred in Scripture. This exercise enables the Self to listen to and care for inner movements in the presence of the divine or Jesus Christ while entering into a scriptural story. As the participants inhale and exhale, they discern the presence of the divine or God. In “reading the scripture with imagination,” the spiritual leader first reads Matthew 20:29-34, called, “Jesus Heals Two Blind Men.” Then the spiritual leader reads one sentence at a time, pausing

after each one and inviting the participants to experience the story with their five senses. In “embodying us into the story,” the participants enter into the story and imagine it happening within their inner world. The spiritual director leads the practice as follows: (1) Discern that there are many emotions, thoughts, desires, and impulses within your inner world. (2) Connect with the story and imagine your inner movements as the two blind men. (3) Visualize that the two blind men as your inner movements are crying out, are acting within you, and are showing you with their facial expressions that they want something. (4) However, other parts of your or your inner parts do not want to listen to their words. The parts rebuke the cries of the inner movements personified by the two blind men and say to them, “Be quiet.” (5) But the inner movements cry out even more. (6) In “sensing the presence of the divine” at that time, we and the divine as Jesus Christ gaze at the two blind men with compassionate hearts. Then we and the divine pay attention to them and say to them, “What are your fears? What do you want me to do for you?” (7) The two blind men say to the divine, “Lord, we want our sight.” Listen to what the inner movements imaged as the two blind men want and need. (8) As the divine gazes upon them, we look intently at them. The divine and we touch their eyes with compassionate hearts. We sense their sufferings, fears, and desires. (9) They receive their sight after Jesus Christ touches their eyes. The inner movements are quiet, still, and peaceful through the divine’s touch and our compassionate heart. In “welcoming the flow of the grace and presence of the divine into our bodies, souls, and spirits,” we sense the compassionate touch and gaze of the divine. We invite the flowing of the grace and presence of the divine into our bodies, souls, and spirits.

Sharing the Sacred Experiences. The participants share with each other the sacred experiences, insights, and challenges that have arisen in the previous procedures.

Invitation to Compassionate Actions. The participants are invited to engage in

compassionate actions in the presence of the divine. They decide what to do in their daily lives for connection with God and the Self. They close with the following prayer: “May we be with you, God; may we stay in Your presence; and may we fulfill our compassionate actions in Your presence.”

The Fifth Session (Extending Self-Compassion into Compassion for Others)

The fifth session focuses on establishing the foundation for compassion for others in connection with the Self and the divine. In other words, we extend self-compassion into the expression of compassion for others in this session. Compassion for others emerges from self-compassion. Thus, this session is designed to nurture compassion for others in connection with the Self and lay solid groundwork for exercising compassion toward others.

Getting Grounded. While breathing in and out, the participants distance themselves from their inner movements. They pay attention to what is happening within them. They sense the presence of the divine or God through their breathing in and out. The spiritual director reads John 20:21-22: “Again Jesus said, ‘Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.’ And with that he breathed on them and said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’” The participants imagine that they pulsate with the pulse of Jesus Christ. When they are connected with the divine, they say their opening prayer: “May we stay in Your presence; may we be free from suffering; and may others be free from suffering. In Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.”

Spiritual Awareness. For spiritual awareness, the participants engage in the following procedure: (1) The participants first discern the presence of the divine through breathing in and out. (2) They give thanks to the divine for grace and blessings and ask the divine presence to be with them in their spiritual awareness. (3) They reflect on their past week or a given day or event or experience in their lives. (4) In particular, they reflect on whom they met with and spoke with.

(5) They focus on the inner movements, such as love, compassion, anger, or tension that arose within them as they were with other people. (6) They discern their emotions, feelings, and thoughts in those moments. 7) While they reflect on the moments, they pray to the divine or God if they need any help from the divine. (8) They ask that they will remain in God's presence and grace in their lives, now and in the future. (9) They pray to God with a heart full of gratitude.

Teaching. The lesson in the fifth session builds up the groundwork for compassion for others based on the foundation of self-compassion. The participants are taught the five Christian Principles of Compassion enumerated by Triptykos and the CEC. The principles are, “a God of compassion enfolds all of creation,” “the essence of humanity is compassion in the image of God,” “cultivating compassion for others begins with cultivating compassion for ourselves,” and “cultivating compassion for others flows from our truest self, restored and attuned to God’s compassion for the world.”²⁵ These Christian principles enable the participants to establish the grounds for extending self-compassion into compassion for others. Moreover, the participants gain a desire that others will also be free from suffering and flourish in their lives through compassionate living.

Encountering the Sacred in Scripture. This practice invites the participants to extend self-compassion into compassion for others through a biblical story. The participants sense the presence of the divine through breathing in and out. In “reading the scripture with imagination,” the spiritual leader reads John 13:29-34, “Jesus Washes His Disciples’ Feet,” encouraging the participants to visualize the story and make it alive and active. The spiritual leader reads one sentence at a time, pausing after each sentence so the participants can engage in the story with their five senses, continuing until the end of the story. In “embodying us into the story,” the spiritual leader guides the participants to enter into the story as follows: (1) Imagine your way

²⁵ Rogers, Yaconelli, and Dreitcer, *Practicing Compassion*, 18–24.

into the story and try to experience it with your five senses. (2) What scenes and environments do you see? What sounds do you hear? What do you smell? What are the disciples of Jesus doing? What is Jesus Christ doing? (3) Imagine Jesus Christ taking off his outer clothing and wrapping a towel around his waist. He pours water into a basin and begins to wash his disciples' feet. (4) What do the disciples feel? What are their emotions? How do they feel about the touch of Jesus Christ? (5) For "sensing the presence of the divine," feel the divine's heart, emotions, and touch as if you were one of the disciples. (6) If you sense that inner movements are activated within you, imagine wrapping a towel around your waist, pouring water, and beginning to wash the image or images of the inner movements with a compassionate heart. (7) Listen, understand, and care for them while washing and touching them. (8) After sensing that the inner movements are being healed and cared for in connection with the divine and the Self, reflect on the words of Jesus Christ, "Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you" (John 13:14-15). For "welcoming the flow of the grace and presence of the divine into our bodies, souls, and spirits," participants sense compassionate touching and gazing from the divine and reflect on the words of Jesus Christ again. They welcome the flow of the grace and presence of the divine into their bodies, souls, and spirits.

Sharing the Sacred Experiences. The participants share with each other the sacred experiences, insights, and challenges that have arisen for them. The sharing enables the participants to nurture giving grace and blessing to one another.

Invitation to Compassionate Actions. The participants are invited to act compassionately in the presence of the divine. Without compassionate actions, they do not form compassion. Compassionate actions engage persons in the healing, restoration, and nurturing of themselves

and others in the divine presence. Thus, the participants decide what to do in their daily lives to bring about healing, restoration, and flourishing for themselves and others. They close with prayer: “May we stay in Your presence; may we flourish in our lives; and may others flourish in their lives. In Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.”

The Sixth Session (Cultivating Compassion for Loved Ones)

The sixth through eighth sessions focus on nurturing compassion for others, including loved ones, neutral persons, and even enemies. First, the sixth session is designed to nurture compassion for loved ones. Nurturing compassion for loved ones is easier and more natural than nurturing compassion for neutral or difficult persons. Moreover, it helps us to nurture positive emotions, such as loving-kindness, warmth, empathy, and compassion, which can then be extended toward neutral and difficult persons. Loved ones are the most important people in a person’s life — a child, parent, husband, wife, friend, or some other significant person.

Getting Grounded. While the participants inhale and exhale, they settle and clear their minds, distancing themselves from distorted thoughts and the wanderings of the mind. They pay attention to what is happening to them in the present moment and then sense the presence of the divine or God. The spiritual director reads John 20:21-22 and asks the participants to imagine that they are pulsating with the pulse of Jesus Christ. Then they do their opening prayer: “May we stay in Your presence; may we be free from suffering; and may others be free from suffering. In Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.”

Spiritual Awareness. The spiritual awareness procedure begins with giving thanks to the divine who has been with each person. Participants reflect on the presence and activities of the divine, who has been with them wherever they have been. The procedure is also designed to help participants discern any emotions, thoughts, inner voices, desires, or impulses that are activated

in their lives. The procedure is as follows: (1) The participants give thanks to the divine for the divine's presence. (2) They ask that they will experience the love and compassion of the divine and be able to restore the images of God in their spiritual awareness. (3) They reflect on their past week or a given day, event, or experience in their lives. (4) The participants discern when they have been connected with or disconnected from the divine. (5) They reflect on whom they have spent time with and spoken with. (5) They focus on a moment spent with a loved one or ones. (6) If a loved one is suffering from any diseases or events, they visualize the loved one with a compassionate mind and heart. (7) They consider what is happening to the loved one physically, psychologically, and emotionally. (8) They nurture affection and positive feelings and thoughts for the loved one in the moment. (7) As they reflect on moments with loved ones, they pray to the divine or God for assistance if they need any help from the divine. (8) They ask that their loved ones remain in God's presence and grace and be free from suffering. (9) They pray to God with a heart full of gratitude.

Teaching. The lesson in the sixth session focuses on the Tonglen practice in order to awaken participants' compassionate minds and hearts for others. Tonglen practice is designed to take in darkness and negativity and send out light and compassion. Thus, in the Tonglen practice, we breathe in the pain and sufferings of others and breathe out compassion and loving-kindness toward others. This practice helps us to nurture compassion for others.

Encountering the Sacred in Scripture. This practice aims to help participants nurture compassion toward loved ones through engaging with a biblical story. In "reading the scripture with imagination," the spiritual leader reads Mark 2:1-12, called, "Jesus heals a Paralytic," making the story come alive and feel actual. In "embodying us into the story," the participants enter into the story with their five senses under the guidance of the spiritual leader as follows: (1)

Imagine the scene, sounds, and characters of the story. (2) Four men had heard that Jesus could heal all diseases, so they carry their loved one who is paralyzed to where Jesus is staying. (3) However, there are too many people around Jesus; there is no room, not even outside the door, for them to access Jesus. (4) They want their loved one to be healed. (5) Imagine the four men's emotions and desires. (6) But then they come up with an idea for getting their loved one to Jesus. (7) They dig an opening in the roof of the house where Jesus is and let down the mat on which the paralyzed man is lying. (8) For "sensing the presence of the divine," participants witness Jesus recognizing the four men's compassion and saying to the loved one, "Get up; take your mat and walk." (9) The loved one gets up, picks up his mat, and walks out in full view of everyone. (10) The participants are instructed to pray to the divine or Jesus Christ that their loved ones will be free from suffering, as if the paralyzed man becomes their loved one in the presence of Jesus Christ. (11) Then they are told to nurture their compassionate hearts and desires as if they are the four men. For "welcoming the flow of the grace and presence of the divine into our bodies, souls, and spirits," the participants discern the presence of the divine and cultivate compassionate hearts, allowing the flow of the grace and presence of the divine into their bodies, souls, and spirits.

Sharing the Sacred Experiences. The participants share with each other the sacred experiences, insights, and challenges that have arisen for them. The sharing contributes to the blooming in their lives of compassionate living.

Invitation to Compassionate Actions. the participants determine compassionate actions they can take to bring about healing, restoration, and growth in their loved ones' lives. They say their ending prayer: "May we remain in Your presence; may we flourish in our lives; and may others flourish in their lives. In Jesus Christ we pray. Amen."

The Seventh Session (Cultivating Compassion for a Neutral Person)

In the sixth session, participants nurtured their compassionate hearts, extending compassion for themselves to loved ones. It helped them cultivate positive emotions toward a loved one, such as warmth, loving-kindness, and compassion. In the seventh session, participants extend their compassionate hearts from compassion for themselves and one close to them to a neutral person whom they neither like nor dislike. This connecting with a neutral person in whom they are not interested is a very important opportunity for participants to nurture compassion.

Getting Grounded. The participants try the Tonglen practice provided in the Teaching section of the sixth session. While focusing on breathing in and out, they first distance themselves from inner movements attached to any emotions or thoughts. They become open and sensitive to paying attention to what happens to them. Then they become aware of the presence of the divine around them. In the second stage, they imagine taking in negative qualities and sending out positive qualities through all the pores of their own bodies. They repeat this process until breathing in and out is natural. In the third stage, they begin to take in and send out in relationship to a special person they know who is suffering. After breathing in the suffering and pain of the special person, they breathe out compassion, warmth, and loving-kindness toward the person. Finally, they do the opening prayer: “May we stay in Your presence; may we be free from suffering; and may others be free from suffering. In Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.”

Spiritual Awareness. The spiritual awareness procedure of the seventh session includes giving thanks to the divine and reflecting on the presence of the divine in recent days or events. It particularly focuses on discerning a neutral person with whom participants do not have any significant connection. The spiritual leader leads the spiritual awareness process as follows: (1)

Give thanks to the divine and discern the presence of the divine in your life over the past week.

(2) Think back to persons whom you encountered in the street, at a store, and in other public areas who did not raise any particular emotions for you. (3) Visualize in detail one of these neutral persons whom you encountered. (4) In order to cultivate compassion for this neutral person, sense that the neutral person is created in the image of God, is suffering as a result of inner movements, and has a desire to be free from suffering and to flourish in compassionate living. (5) Imagine what the neutral person is doing and feeling in the present moment. (6) Placing yourself in the neutral person's shoes with a compassionate mind and heart, reflect on his or her fears, sufferings, needs, gifts, and desires. (7) Nurture compassionate attitudes, feelings, desires, and thoughts within you toward the neutral person in the present moment. (9) As you are remembering the neutral person, pray to the divine that the neutral person remains in God's presence, is freed from suffering, and experiences flourishing in his or her life.

Teaching. The lesson focuses on the practice developed by Triptykos and the CEC of “taking their Pulse,” or cultivating compassion for another. The practice of PULSE for others is as follows: We first *pay attention* to another without any judgment or prejudice. When we discern the uniqueness and particularity of another, we *understand empathically* his or her fears, longings, aches, and hidden gifts. When we understand his or her emotions, thoughts, motivations, and desires, we become an all-accepting presence who *loves in connectedness* with another. When compassion flows within us, we *sense the Sacredness* and are invited to *embody new life*, freeing others from their sufferings and bringing about their flourishing in the fullness of happiness. However, we need to remain alert in this practice as to whether inner movements are happening within us, and we should take our Pulse if they do occur. The reason is that compassion for oneself is a prerequisite for compassion for others.

Encountering the Sacred in Scripture. In this practice, the participants cultivate compassion toward their neutral persons in the presence of the divine through engaging in a scriptural story. In “reading the scripture with imagination,” the participants listen to the story of Jesus healing a sick woman found in Mark 5:29-34 and use the active imagination method. The spiritual leader reads one sentence at a time and pauses after each sentence to allow the participants to imagine the story. For “embodying us into the story,” the participants visualize the scene, sounds, and characters of the story using their five senses under the guidance of the spiritual leader as follows: (1) While breathing in and out, enter into the story. (2) There is a huge crowd around Jesus, who is walking in the street. (3) There is a woman who has suffered from continuous hemorrhaging for 12 years. (3) Although the woman has consulted with many doctors to heal her suffering, she has not been healed. (4) She has used up all her resources and is suffering greatly. (5) At that time, the woman heard that Jesus would pass through her village. She believed that she would be healed when she touched Jesus. (6) When Jesus entered the village, the woman was just one person in the crowd. (7) Jesus did not know the sick woman; she was just a neutral person whom he passed in the street. (8) However, when she touches the hem of Jesus’ garment, she is healed. (9) There are people around us who are suffering, like the woman in the story, although we do not know it. There are people who need our help and compassion. (10) Discern a suffering person whom you have encountered as a neutral person. (11) Imagine what the person is suffering from, what the person’s fears are, and what the person needs or wants. (12) Reflect on the words of Jesus, “Go in peace and be freed from your suffering” (Mark 5:34). (13) Send a prayer to the neutral person with Jesus’ words: “Go in peace and be freed from your suffering.” (14) For “sensing the presence of the divine”—although Jesus had not connected with the woman before, he recognized her suffering and healed her disease

with a compassionate heart. Moreover, he desires that she be free from suffering. Now, sense the presence and grace of Jesus Christ. For “welcoming the flow of the grace and presence of the divine into our bodies, souls, and spirits”—as we discern the presence of the divine and sense the compassionate heart of Jesus Christ, we allow the flow of grace and compassion into our bodies, souls, and spirits.

Sharing the Sacred Experiences. The participants share the sacred experiences, insights, challenges, and inspiration that have arisen for them through the session’s practices.

Invitation to Compassionate Actions. The participants decide on compassionate actions to engage in to connect with the divine, self, and others. Compassion includes healing, restoration, and the thriving of others, especially the selected neutral person, in the presence of the divine.

They say the ending prayer: “May we remain in Your presence; may we flourish in our lives; and may others flourish in their lives. In Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.”

The Eighth Session (Cultivating Compassion for a Difficult Person)

The eighth session is designed to cultivate compassion for a person who has harmed us or with whom we have had a conflict. In general, we tend to avoid or have aggressive attitudes toward difficult persons in our lives. The reason is that we are disconnected from these people. The disconnection from a difficult person brings about suffering within us because movements in the relationship with that person occur in our inner world. Thus, compassion is the spiritual path toward becoming free from suffering and finding nourishment in our lives. We must connect with the difficult person to exercise compassion toward him or her.

Getting Grounded. The participants first discern the presence of the divine through breathing in and out. When they are grounded with the divine, they begin the Tonglen practice by taking in negative qualities and sending out positive qualities for a special person who is

suffering. They imagine taking in the suffering, anger, and worries of the special person while breathing in. While breathing out, they send out compassion, warmth, and loving-kindness toward him or her. They end this exercise with the opening prayer: “May we stay in Your presence; may we be free from suffering; and may others be free from suffering. In Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.”

Spiritual Awareness. The spiritual awareness procedure of the eighth session aims to guide participants to discern their inner movements in relationship to the difficult person and his or her sufferings while they are in the presence of the divine. The spiritual leader leads the spiritual awareness exercise as follow: (1) Give thanks to the divine and discern the presence of the divine. (2) Think back to a difficult person who has harmed you or with whom you have had serious conflicts in the past. (3) Discern the inner movements happening within you as you visualize the difficult person. (4) If inner movements are activated in your consciousness, return to the practice of self-compassion to reflect on the fears, needs, and wants of the inner movements. (5) If inner movements do not occur within you as you recall the difficult person, imagine what the person is doing and feeling in the present moment. (6) With a compassionate heart, reflect on why the difficult person behaves offensively. (7) Stand in that person’s shoes and reflect on his or her fears, sufferings, needs, gifts, and desires. (8) Nurture compassionate feelings, desires, and thoughts within you in the present moment. (9) Pray to the divine that the difficult person remains in God’s presence, is freed from suffering, and thrives in his or her life.

Teaching. In this lesson, we have a second time of “taking their Pulse,” or cultivating compassion for the other. First of all, we recognize that the offensive behaviors of the difficult person emerge from his or her sufferings. The difficult person is also suffering from inner movements which bring about offensive behaviors. Secondly, while reflecting on the difficult

person, we should cultivate compassion for ourselves if inner movements are activated within us. The reason is that the parts which bring about inner movements need to be cared for and healed. Finally, we discern that we can cultivate compassion for the difficult person when we put ourselves in the place of that person. Thus, we can exercise compassionate understanding for the difficult person, reflecting on his or her fears, worries, anxieties, desires, and hidden gifts. This awareness enables us to overcome disconnection from the difficult person.

Encountering the Sacred in Scripture. This practice helps the participants cultivate compassion toward difficult persons through engagement in a biblical story. For the “reading the scripture with imagination,” step, the spiritual director reads Luke 10:30-35, “The Story of the Good Samaritan.” The spiritual director reads one sentence at a time, pausing after each sentence to help the participants participate in the story through active imagination. For “embodying us into the story,” the participants imagine the scene using their five senses as the spiritual leader guides them through the following: (1) While breathing in and out, enter into the story. (2) There is a man who runs into some robbers. They strip him, beat him, and go away, leaving him half dead. (3) Imagine his suffering, fears, wants, and needs. (4) A person walks down the road toward him, but passes by on the other side. Another person comes along, sees his injuries, and also passes by on the other side. (5) A Samaritan on a journey comes to the man and sees his injuries. Although the Samaritan recognizes the man as a Jew, one of the people who had no positive regard for Samaritans, the Samaritan is aware of the man’s sufferings and feels compassion for him. So he bandages his wounds and takes care of him. (6) Discern the compassionate feelings, thoughts, and desires of the Samaritan toward the injured man. (7) Visualize a difficult person you know who is suffering just as the injured man suffered. (8) Become like the Samaritan and imagine this person’s sufferings, fears, needs, and wants. (9)

Imagine that you feel compassion toward your difficult person, bandage his or her wounds, and takes care of him or her. (10) For “sensing the presence of the divine”—as you forgive your difficult person by recognizing that his or her offensive behaviors emerge from his or her suffering, discern the presence of God, the compassionate source, in the processes of healing and restoration. (11) Pray for the difficult one who is suffering: “May the peace of the divine be with you. May you experience divine healing.” For “welcoming the flow of the grace and presence of the divine”—as we discern the presence of the compassionate source, we feel the flowing of compassion through our bodies, souls, and spirits.

Sharing the Sacred Experiences. The participants share the sacred experiences, insights, challenges, and inspiration that have arisen through this session’s practices.

Invitation to Compassionate Actions. The participants decide what they will do for the healing, restoration, and flourishing of others in connection with the divine, self, and others. What we pay attention to in this session is that compassionate actions for difficult persons include resistance toward violence, oppression, and injustice and taking accountability for one’s own offensive behaviors. The session closes with the prayer: “May we remain in Your presence; may we flourish in our lives; and may others flourish in their lives. In Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

Chapter 6

Reflections and Implications of a Study in Compassion Formation within a Korean Congregation

In Chapter 5, I delineated differences and similarities in the meanings, issues, and practices of compassion for Buddhism, some secular fields, and Christian perspectives. Based on this research, I created an eight-week course of compassion practices for my congregation, integrating and using important principles and practices of cultivating compassion from these three areas. Then I implemented the curriculum with members of my church.

This chapter describes and examines the responses and experiences of participants who participated in my compassion practices course. I will not provide solutions to any problems or issues but will simply describe in depth how participants responded to the curriculum. For this examination, I use a case study qualitative research method to acquire a deep understanding of individuals' experiences and struggles. The case study method will facilitate reflection on the processes, responses to, and transformative results of compassion formation in terms of the interaction between church members and my classes on compassion practices. This research will serve as a vital and valuable foundation for cultivating compassionate living and will suggest directions for future studies in compassion formation.

Description of the Study of Compassion Formation within a Korean Congregation

Recruiting Participants for the Compassion Practices Course

I have served the Dream Korean United Methodist Church in Pasadena as an associate pastor for the past three years. My church offers a variety of church programs, including Bible classes, spiritual discipline classes, and spiritual counseling programs, two semesters a year, in the spring and the fall. In September 2013, I recruited participants who would be willing to attend a compassion practices course during the fall semester for my research project. The senior

pastor and I announced the course, including the compassion practices, at 11:00 a.m. Sunday services. We announced that the course would be used for my research. Six members of the congregation wanted to join the compassion practices course. Participation was completely voluntary, and all the participants signed the consent form found in Appendix A. I carried out the eight-week course with the volunteers from October 1st to December 10th. Each session was supposed to last just one hour, but they ended up continuing for one and a half to two hours.

Research Methodology

I used the qualitative research method of the case study to gain an in-depth understanding of the interactions between participants and the compassion practices curriculum. According to educational psychologist John Creswell, the case study focuses on “in-depth description and analysis” of a case or issue.¹ Thus, in this chapter I utilize the case study method to describe how the participants responded to the curriculum for compassion formation. I analyze detailed descriptions of participants’ experiences, awarenesses, responses, and transformations in relation to the compassion practices course. During the course, I invited the participants to share orally or in writing their concrete experiences or stories of how they interacted with the curriculum in relation to three kinds of issues addressed through the compassion practices. My specific concerns were as follows: (1) Were the participants able to become grounded in an encounter with the Sacred in their lives and how? (2) How did they interact internally with their interior parts and Selves? (3) How did they interact with their loved ones, neutral persons, and enemies?

Moreover, within the framework of the case study, I employed the narrative research method.² According to Creswell, the narrative research method encourages participants to tell their own experiences, which reveals not only “the identities of individuals” but also “how they

¹ Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*, 104.

² Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*, 70–76.

see themselves.”³ As participants from my congregation attended the compassion practices program, I encouraged them to share in detail, verbally or in writing, their experiences as they interacted with the teachings and practices of the compassion practices course. The data collected were their narratives and experiences in the form of spiritual journals, pictures, symbolic art, and recorded conversations. Conversations about the practices were recorded in an audio format using my phone’s voice recorder. With the permission of the participants, spiritual journals that they had kept were digitally transcribed and their pictures and symbolic artwork were photographed using my phone.

Participants

Six members of my congregation, four women and two men, participated in the compassion practices course. I will use the following pseudonyms for the participants: Nancy, Susan, Linda, Betty, Steven, and John. Their ages range from the mid-fifties to early sixties. I gave them Appendix B during the first session of the course in order to gain a basic understanding of their spiritual lives. I will briefly introduce the participants using the material they wrote in response to the questions in Appendix B.

Nancy is 58 years old and works as a nurse. She became a Christian when she was in high school and has attended our church since 2007. Her main spiritual disciplines are to attend Bible studies, meetings of intercessory prayer, and Early Morning Prayer. Her goal for her practice of spiritual disciplines is maturity of faith in Jesus Christ. The sacred place where she practices these disciplines is a prayer room at the church. In response to the question, “Have you exercised spiritual practices for your own and others benefit?” she stated that she prays for herself and others during the intercessory prayer meetings.

³ Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*, 71.

Susan is 55 years old and is an employee of an insurance company. She was born into a Christian family and has attended our church since 2000. Her spiritual disciplines are attending Bible classes, spiritual retreats, and Christian counseling programs. She aims to discern the presence of God and strengthen her faith in God. Her sacred place is mainly the church, and she prays for her children and family.

Linda is 61 years old and a housewife. She became a Christian when she was six years old and has attended our church since 1993. Her spiritual disciplines are to attend Bible classes and worship services, with the goals of coming to know God and learn the Bible. Sacred places for her are the church, a retreat center, and her house. Her spiritual practices for herself are attending Bible classes, reading the Bible, and praying. Her spiritual practice for others is participating in the meetings of intercessory prayer which the church provides.

Betty is 58 years old and works for a company. She became a Christian in elementary school and has attended the church since 2012. Her spiritual disciplines are reading the Bible and attending worship services and Bible classes. She aims to encounter God through her spiritual disciplines. The sacred places for her spiritual life are the church and her car. She practices spiritual disciplines for herself and others through a retreat center's prayer meetings and the church's intercessory prayer meetings.

Steven is 61 years old and works for a bank. He became a Christian in 1990 and has attended our church since 2002. He has participated in church retreats, Bible classes and seminars, and worship services in order to strengthen his faith. His sacred places are the church and an office room in his bank. He has exercised spiritual practices for himself and others such as church leadership seminars and church meetings.

John is 63 years old and works for a company. He converted from Buddhism to Christianity in 2008 and has attended the church since 2012. His spiritual disciplines are attending worship services and Bible classes. The goal for his practice of these disciplines is to discern the presence of God. His sacred places are the church and the living room of his house. He has engaged in spiritual disciplines for himself and others through participating in worship services and prayer meetings.

Analyzing the participants' spiritual lives based on their responses to the questions in Appendix B, I find that they mainly depend on church programs, such as worship services, prayer meetings, Bible study classes, and church retreats, for their spiritual disciplines. In other words, their primary avenue for developing and maturing their faith is participation in church programs. Thus, they focus on the communal living of faith rather than personal and reflective forms of faith. Subsequently, their primary sacred place for practicing their spiritual disciplines is the space of the church. In sum, the scope of the space and times for their spiritual disciplines is very limited because they restrict their practice of spirituality to church programs and the sacred places in the church.

An interesting thing to note is that all the participants like to attend Bible classes as a spiritual discipline. The reason for this is that they consider the Bible to be a sacred resource for meeting the goals of experiencing God, knowing God, and strengthening their faith. In this respect, it seems that they also have a limited understanding of the Bible as just an important sacred resource to discern the presence of God.

Description and Analysis of the Processes of Compassion Formation

Awareness of the Sacred Places and Times in One's Daily Life. As I explained previously, the participants' main sacred place was the church. Before I began the compassion practices

course, I asked them to decide upon a sacred place and a regular sacred time for engaging in the compassion practices in their daily lives. Betty determined that her sacred place would be her car because she spends a lot of her daily life in her car. Susan selected an empty room in her house, Nancy her office room, Linda her living room, Steven his office, and John his living room.

After one week, I asked the group whether or not they had engaged in the practices in the places and at the times upon which they had decided. They all answered that it was difficult for them to set apart a sacred time and place in their daily lives for exercising compassion practices. Susan emphasized during the conversation of the second session that she is accustomed to praying and worshipping God in the church: "Praying and worshipping God in the church helps me to experience God much more." Nancy explained that she did not have any opportunities to pray to and discern God in her busy life. Likewise, Steven stated that he realized it was difficult for him to have a sacred time and place for discerning God in the midst of his daily life. Betty felt that it was a burden to exercise the compassion practice every day. When she missed one day of engaging in a compassion practice, she gave up the practice for the rest of the week. She also shared that she forgot to make room for her sacred time and place in her daily life because of busyness. Thus, most of the participants asserted that it was difficult for them to set apart a sacred time and place for compassion practices in their daily lives.

During the second and third weeks, the participants continued to struggle with honoring their sacred times and places for spiritual practice in their daily lives. Therefore, as part of the class, they reflected on their own lives and the attitudes that were inhibiting them from making their times and places sacred and holy. In this respect, Susan shared in the third session, "I reflected on myself as a person who did not have sacred time in a sacred place for five or ten minutes out of one week in my life for encountering the sacred." The awareness the participants

gained provided them with the motivation to really set apart sacred time in sacred places for opening up to the Sacred, including God, Self, and others. Thus, in the fourth through eighth sessions, five of the participants—Steven, Susan, Nancy, Linda, and Betty—shared the experiences, insights, and challenges that arose for them in their sacred times and places. However, John struggled with setting apart sacred time in a sacred place until the end of the course. He made several excuses: forgetting to do the practices, the difficulties of discerning the presence of God and inner movements, and unfamiliarity with the breathing in and out and specific compassion practices. Thus, he did not participate well in the class’s conversations.

During the conversations of the seventh and eighth sessions, it was interesting to find that the sacred moments of the participants in their specially selected times and places were extended into their daily lives. They began to discern the presence of God, interior movements happening within them, and inner movements and behaviors occurring in response to their relationships with others in their daily lives. For example, Linda expressed that she had felt the presence of God in her sacred time and place as well as in her daily life as if God was near her. Nancy became aware of interior movements caused by her relationship with her boss in her life at work. Thus, through the processes of the compassion practices, the awareness the participants experienced in their sacred times and places transformed their spiritualities into practices of daily life and not just church-sponsored activities.

Getting Grounded. The aim of the procedure of “getting grounded” is to discern the presence of God in the present moment through breathing in and out. However, most of the participants struggled throughout all the sessions with this procedure.

In the first session, Betty shared that she was not able to feel the presence of God while focusing on breathing in and out. Susan also expressed that the practice was difficult for her:

I am not familiar with this practice. Although I wanted to engage in discerning the presence of God through inhaling and exhaling, I was not able to get involved in the practice. I became sleepy and mindless. It is as if my mind wandered.

John asked a basic question: “Why should we exercise breathing in and out in order to discern the presence of God?” Most of the participants’ responses to the breathing exercise for getting grounded were negative and exclusivist. However, Steven approached the practice with curiosity and noted that “although breathing in and out is not familiar to me, I think it may help me to focus on the presence of God.”

In the second session, although I had given instruction during the first session on the positive role and necessity of breathing exercises for distancing ourselves from inner movements and paying attention to what is happening within us, most of the participants had closed and narrow attitudes, questioning why they should breathe in and out in order to discern the presence of God. Susan was suspicious about the need for breathing in and out: “Should we breathe in and out as a spiritual discipline? Why should we feel the pulse of God through breathing in and out? I have experienced the presence of God while praying and praising the gospel in church.” Betty observed that her faith was not at a stage to recognize the presence of the divine through breathing in and out. John told the group, “I should not come here. It was very difficult for me to feel my pulse and to discern the inhabitation of God in this stage of my faith.” Nancy and Linda similarly complained about the difficulties of the exercise. However, Steven had a positive attitude and perspective and sincerely made an effort to engage in the practice:

I believe that it is very important for me to consider what to reflect on in the moment of the breathing exercise. In terms of God being with us in the present moment, it is difficult for us to discern the presence of God unless we imagine God as an image or thing. For example, if we imagine God as a dove, we can easily discern the presence of God. When I breathed in and out, visualizing an image, I could easily recognize the presence of God.

In relation to the procedures for getting grounded, the participants delineated in their conversation several reasons they were not able to fully engage in breathing in and out. The first reason is that they considered the breathing exercise as a practice or tradition of other religions, explaining that “breathing exercises emerged from Buddhism, yoga in Hinduism, and indigenous religions.” Thus, they had exclusivist and rejecting attitudes toward the exercises. The second reason concerned the familiarity of the breathing exercise for them. During all the sessions of the compassion practice, most of the participants expressed that they were not adjusting to the breathing exercises. They did not have open and flexible minds to learn a new spiritual way. In this respect, the third reason the breathing exercises were difficult was because they were different from the participants’ own ways of discerning the presence of God. Thus, they insisted on the rightness of their own ways. Susan asserted that she can discern God by meditating on the Bible and praising God. John experienced God through listening to pastors’ sermons and meditating on the words of the sermons. Betty queried, “Isn’t it important for one to use his or her own ways to have intimacy with God?” Linda believed that praying aloud is the best way for her to discern God. Until the third and fourth sessions, most of the participants stayed in their rejecting and exclusivist positions.

Reflecting on their conversations and responses, I provided that the participants would use varying ways to discern the presence of God in their lives. Nonetheless, I encouraged them to engage in the breathing in and out exercise during the rest of the sessions on the compassion practices.

During the fifth and sixth sessions, the participants’ attitudes and responses began to be transformed a little bit. John explained the positive role of breathing in and out, saying, “When we are angry and resentful, the exercises will help us to control and distance ourselves from them

[our inner movements].” Susan described a transformation of her awareness regarding breathing in and out: “Although I am familiar with ways such as reading the Bible and praising the gospel, I have had a distorted idea that breathing exercises emerge from other religions.” Nancy integrated the breathing exercises into her own spiritual practices. She did not focus on the breathing practice because the sound of the clock often disturbed her breathing exercises, and her mind wandered during the practice. So, while she engaged in the breathing exercise, she would softly speak out in prayer as she was accustomed to doing. She affirmed, “My own way is better than the prior method for paying attention to what happens within me.”

During the seventh and eighth sessions, some of the participants experienced more of a change in their awareness about the breathing exercises. Steven recognized that breathing in and out is based in the Christian tradition as well as other religious traditions. He realized that the Korean way of praying is limited when it is only about praying aloud. Thus, he highlighted that we should accept various forms of prayer, asserting that “we even discern the presence of God through the spiritual method of Koreans. However, these exercises we have experienced in all the sessions of the compassion practices play important roles in experiencing an encounter with the Sacred.” Nancy also changed her prejudice toward the breathing exercises, sharing, “I practiced breathing in and out this morning. But when I am physically tired, I cannot focus on this. However, when I am in a good condition, I can feel that I breathe in and out according to pulse of God.” Linda began to reflect on her method of praying. She observed that in the past she had endlessly spoken to God in prayer about her desires and requests, but she had never tried to listen to the words of God and discern God’s will. However, she realized that the practice of getting grounded through breathing in and out is a very valuable method for discerning the presence of God and what the will of God is. Although the changes in these participants’

awarenesses happened over the course of these sessions, I saw that they continued to struggle with the getting grounded practice. John continued his questioning, saying, “I believe that praying aloud is the only authentic way to experience God. However, I would like to argue about whether the breathing exercises or quiet meditations are biblical. Doesn’t the Bible tell us to cry out in prayer?”

Encountering the Divine or God. The first and second sessions focused on discerning the presence of God in order to restore connection with the divine or God. However, a basic foundation for all the sessions was the getting grounded exercise for discerning the presence of God. After the first two sessions, all the participants, in principle, had engaged in discerning the presence of God through accurate awareness of how to discern God’s presence and through nurturing feelings and inspirations experienced in previous encounters with God in their lives.

The first response of the participants about encountering God focused on the issue of what discerning the presence of God really means. During the first session, I asked the participants to reflect on recent events or days in order to feel the presence of God in the present moment. Some participants did not understand the meaning of discerning the presence of God. Susan asked, “What does it mean to discern the presence of God in the present moment?” Similarly, John queried, “What does it mean to encounter God in the present moment?” Betty attempted an interpretation in her question: “Is discerning the presence of God about reflecting on how God loves me?” Their questions were rooted in a misunderstanding that encountering God is just about having a mystical experience.

However, through Linda’s stories, other participants began to understand the meaning of discerning the presence of God. In the first session, Linda explained her insights from the procedure of spiritual awareness through Examen.

As I reflected on the past 24 hours from morning to evening, I felt the moments that God was with me and when I was disconnected from God. I have had a difficult time over the past two years and have been disconnected from God. I could not feel peaceful. I was always uneasy and anxious about my life. When I reflected on the peaceful moments in my life, it was in those moments that I was connected with God. While contemplating the presence of God in my life, I felt the presence of God in the present moment.

After listening to Linda's narrative, the other participants realized the authentic meaning of discerning God's presence. Once they became aware that experiencing the presence of God not only includes mystical experiences but also being together with the divine or God in daily life and in the class sessions, they were able to encounter God through the spiritual practices of the course.

The second response the participants had to encountering God is that they were able to naturally experience gratitude, positive feelings, and inspiration in the present moment once they had recalled encounters with God in the past. Steven remembered a difficult moment in his life and reflected on his experience of God as follows:

I came to the USA in 2002 and was having a difficult time at that time. In particular, my son had been sick for one and a half months. We could not find out the cause of his disease although we went to many hospitals. So I had to quit my job to take care of my son. I was a beginner in faith at that time. Some church members encouraged me to attend an Early Morning Prayer meeting at 5:30 a.m. So I began to pray for my son for one and a half months. After finishing one and a half months of prayer, my son was miraculously healed. Then I got a new job in the bank to which he wanted to go. I believed that God guided and planned all these processes. I discerned the presence of God at this time. As I reflected on my past through the Examen prayer, all the experiences of that time came up in my mind. I experienced an encounter with God at that time. And I felt grateful to God who was with me, and I felt the presence of God.

Steven brought the gratitude and grace which he had felt in his past encounter with God into the present. He explained, "I feel God in the present moment just as he has been with me in the past." In Steven's case, reflecting on a past memory cultivated his ability to discern the presence of God in the present moment.

Similarly, John described his experiences of God in the past and how he carried the feelings and inspirations of his past experiences into the present moment to encounter God in the here and now.

I believe that I walk with God although I have not had any particular mystical experiences in my life of faith. My job is physically very hard. So there was a time I felt physically sick every day. At that time, I said, "In the name of Jesus Christ I command the diseases to come out of me!" Whenever I prayed like this, I felt I was healed. I believe that I was healed because God was with me. Moreover, I was a heavy smoker. Although I was trying to quit smoking, I had failed at it many times. However, when I participated in a church retreat, I was able to quit smoking. This also was because God was with me. I believe that I could not have done that by my own efforts alone.

John also cultivated gratitude and grace from God in the present moment through reflecting on his past: "I believe God has guided me in most situations until now according to my needs and situations."

The third response to the practice of encountering God is that the participants were trying to discern the presence of God in their daily lives through changes in their theological understandings. Nancy experienced a change in her understanding of the nature of God: "I thought that God is a transcendental being. So I understood that God did not intercede in my life at all. Through reflecting on spiritual awareness, I felt that God is near me, like a friend, in the present moment. While I was driving my car, I could sometimes feel the presence of God. I recognized that this was also discerning the presence of God. And I believe that God is closely related to me and guides my daily life in detail."

Steven experienced a change in his perspective of where God's presence could be found:

I went to the mountain last Saturday. While I was climbing it, I discovered a quiet and comfortable place. While I was sitting there, I suddenly felt the presence of God, who is within nature. I felt that all the trees, birds, and forests around me praised the greatness and almightiness of God. And I discerned the activities of God in nature.

Likewise, through practicing Examen, Susan realized that the places and times for discerning God's presence are not limited:

I incorrectly believed that the only place I could encounter God was in the church, that it was the only sacred place. I am so happy and grateful that God is with me in my whole life. Recently, I was communicating with God in the moment while I was cooking. When I see a clear sky, I am grateful to God who gives it to us, and I talk with God about the clear sky.

Linda emphasized the free and flexible forms or ways to discern the presence of God, saying, "the spiritual approaches to discerning the presence of God are not fixed. It is important for us to experience God in the most comfortable and familiar ways in daily life." Thus, Linda experienced a change in her understanding about ways to be spiritual.

Encountering Inner Movements or Parts. The third and fourth sessions focus on restoring connection with the Self through encountering inner parts and becoming aware of inner movements that arise within oneself. Although the fifth through eighth sessions are designed to restore connections with others, these sessions also deal with inner parts or inner movements that have arisen in relationships with others.

First, after I had described for the participants what it means to encounter inner parts or to become aware of inner movements, they indicated that they had not been aware of inner movements causing suffering in their lives and neither did they feel a need to be aware of them. When I asked participants to become aware of inner movements happening within them, they did not understand why they should get in touch with these inner movements or their inner parts. Susan and Betty asked, "Why should we communicate with our inner parts and become aware of inner movements?" Susan argued about the necessity of having a spiritual practice that allowed her to witness her inner movements: "If I hate someone, why should I be aware of my heart of hatred? He or she makes me hate him or her. That person brought up the heart of hatred in me.

So I don't understand why I need to recognize these inner movements." In sum, the participants were not aware of their inner movements and what causes their sufferings.

Second, after the third session, I especially focused on doing the practices with the participants that would help them become aware of their inner movements and to communicate with their inner parts hidden within their inner movements. They began recognizing how their inner movements or inner parts plagued them in their lives. Steven was not able to observe his inner movements the first time we did an exercise connected to this. However, he noticed inner movements, such as worries and anxieties, in the procedures of *Spiritual Awareness* and *Encountering the Sacred in Scripture*. He was worried and anxious about his future as the head of a family. Nancy explained that she was aware of a management part that controls her:

I am a chief nurse who is in charge of a department. If I make a mistake, it affects patients and co-workers. So I should manage my work well. However, it creates a burden in my life. Thus, the management part that brings about worries is activated within me.

Linda described the inner movements that she found being activated within herself: "I have been aware of anger within me in the past week. I've been sacrificing my life for my husband and family. However, my husband does not appreciate my efforts and work. When I see my husband, I feel angry." Betty also shared about her activated inner movements: "I am aware of a sense of betrayal. I have experienced this feeling during the past week. I don't know why this person betrayed me." All the participants were able to become aware of their inner movements or parts in their lives. Awareness of inner movements enabled the participants to recognize that they are suffering and what the causes of their suffering were. For example, Linda realized that inner movements were the causes of her struggles and was curious about a spiritual way to overcome such inner movements, saying, "How can I deal with such feelings that bring about suffering

within me? I am aware my suffering. Unless I reflect on myself or my inner parts, I think such feelings will come to me again.”

Third, although all the participants became aware of their inner movements, their perspectives, methods, or attitudes for dealing with inner movements varied. Susan explained her approaches to suffering and inner movements as follows: “I believe that God guides me in how to overcome such sufferings or such inner movements.” Betty considered emotions of hatred and anger as enemies she needed to overcome, explaining, “I should throw out anger and hatred from my heart. Being angry and hating others is sinful. Thus, I should overcome such feelings through the power of faith. Also, if I am suffering, Satan likes seeing it.” Nancy shared her approaches to dealing with inner movements such as anger and worry: “When I am occupied with worry and anger, I try to forget such feelings. My best ways for forgetting my feelings are to watch TV and talk with my friends. When I do these things, the inner movements within me are alleviated.” Steven realized that his approach to inner movements such as worry, anxiety, and anger is to repress them. In sum, the methods the participants used for dealing with inner movements were to repress, avoid, or overcome them. Although their attitudes toward and ways of responding to inner movements were different, they did not recognize why inner movements happen, what they want, and what they are afraid of. In other words, they did not recognize that inner parts hidden within inner movements need to be cared for and healed.

Fourth, in the fifth session and sixth sessions, I led the participants through an exercise for communicating with their inner parts. They were directed to visualize their inner movements as an image or images in order to communicate with them. They struggled with conversing with their inner movements expressed as images. In the session that involved drawing their inner parts, they visualized their inner movements as an image or images and then drew

them on paper. Linda just drew an angry-looking face for her inner movement. Similarly, Betty drew a face with a sad look, and Susan expressed the emotion of hatred as a flaming candle. John, Steven, and Nancy told me that they did not draw well, so they expressed their inner movements in words, for example, “a sense of disappointment, betrayal, hatred, and anger.” Thus, the participants had difficulty depicting their inner parts as images.

I was able to determine three reasons for the participants’ struggles with visualizing inner movements and parts as images and conversing with them: (1) The participants did not recognize their inner movements as cries of their inner parts; (2) they were not familiar with conversing with inner parts; and (3) they did not feel a necessity to converse with them. In terms of the first reason, the participants just considered negative emotions, such as worry, anger, hatred, anxiety, and betrayal, as simple emotions, rather than as voices of their inner parts. For example, Susan stated, “The emotions of hatred, anger, and worry are just a part or parts of my positive and negative emotions. So, I need to lessen my negative emotions and cultivate positive emotions.” John and Betty vocalized the second reason, explaining the difficulties of and their unfamiliarity with conversing with inner parts, as Betty stated: “I’ve never experienced conversation with inner parts. What is the objective or the subject of the conversation?” Exemplifying the third reason, Linda believed that she did not need to communicate with her inner parts because God would change her mind, emotions, and the environments which made her suffer. Thus, not all the participants engaged in conversing with inner parts, visualizing inner parts as an image or images.

Fifth, although the participants did not initially become deeply involved in conversing with inner parts for the reasons just mentioned, two of the participants did try to converse with the inner parts for which they drew an image or images. For example, Nancy had a difficult relationship with her boss, so she tried to converse with the inner part of hatred that had arisen

within her. The following is the conversation with her inner part that she wrote in her spiritual journal:

Nancy: What brought you up here?

Hatred: I came here because of my boss.

Nancy: Why are you activated?

Hatred: I think my boss is not fair. Also, she is biased and rude toward me.

Nancy: What do you want here?

Hatred: I would like to talk with my boss about her unfairness, biases, and rudeness.

Nancy: What do you desire?

Hatred: I want my boss to behave with fairness and equity and to be transformed.

Nancy conversed with her hatred part three times during the sessions of the compassion practice course. After conversing with this part, she explained that she felt calm and comfortable.

However, she continued to struggle with the part until the sixth session because the part was activated whenever she interacted with her boss. I encouraged her to converse with this part until the last session because her inner part was related to relationships with others.

Linda also tried to communicate with an inner part, her anger toward her husband. She thought her husband did not appreciate her efforts and sacrifices for him and her family. This is the dialogue she wrote in her spiritual journal:

Linda: Why are you activated?

Anger: I am angry and do not understand why the husband does not appreciate my sacrifices.

Linda: What are you afraid of?

Anger: I am afraid that I will lose everything.

Linda: What do you desire?

Anger: I want his appreciation and a thankful heart toward me.

She communicated with her anger part for a short time during the lesson of the sixth session as cited. Then she gave up conversing with her parts. She explained that she was about to cry in the session, so she ended the conversation. She did not want to continue conversing with her anger part in the session. It seemed that she was afraid of revealing her personal life as it related to her family. So I encouraged her to communicate with and care for the part in her personal practice.

Also, I invited her to continue getting in touch with the part until the end of the course, because, like Nancy, her activated part was closely tied to relationships with others.

Unfortunately, four of the members—Betty, Susan, John, and Steven—did not engage in conversing with the parts themselves, for some of the reasons I have already explained.

Nevertheless, I discovered possibilities that they could communicate with their inner parts for the sake of their healing and restoration. In the conversation during the seventh session, John went off topic and shared with us the story of his son:

My son passed away ten years ago. At first, I felt like I wanted to die. It was as if I felt the heart of Abraham, who took his son, Isaac, to the mountain to sacrifice him. I am not suffering now. I believe that God took him. There are no difficulties in my life because of my son's death.

Although John explained that he felt calm and peaceful at the present time, I suggested that he was unconsciously representing his inner part as “exile” in our conversations, according to the terminology of Internal Family Systems. The reason why he stubbornly refused to engage in the exercises for encountering his inner parts is that another part in his inner world may not have wanted to be exposed to the exile as a wounded part of his Self. Although he did not tell us his stories or encounters with his inner parts any more during the rest of the course, he might be able to converse with his inner parts and heal and restore them if he becomes more familiar with the practice or if he seeks out the guidance of a professional spiritual director.

Betty also indicated she had the potential to communicate with her inner part, betrayal.

She believed that God would remove her sense of betrayal and heal her wounds:

I went to the retreat center. While I prayed to God, I felt that I was healed in the presence of God. I thought that I was healed there. However, as I returned to my daily life, the feelings of betrayal and anger were activated in my mind again. I felt that such feelings were relieved and activated again and again. I thought that I was not totally healed.

She struggled with her inner parts in their relationship with each other until the end of the course. Nonetheless, she entered another step, conversing with her inner parts in the presence of God.

Sixth, although the participants did not wholly engage in caring for inner movements as cries of hidden inner parts, their awareness, attitudes, and approaches transformed in some ways. First, they became aware that they are suffering in their daily lives due to disconnection from God, the Self, and others. This awareness is a first step toward restoring connection with the Sacred. Second, they learned to pay attention to what happens within them as they engage in spiritual practices, such as breathing in and out, praying loudly, singing praise or gospel songs, walking, and reading the Bible. Third, they became, in general, aware of inner movements that had arisen within them. They tried to name their inner movements from within their own perspectives. Fourth, they recognized that their inner movements, such as hatred, betrayal, anger, worry, and anxiety, bring about personal suffering. For example, Betty observed, “I lived in hell when the feeling of betrayal was extremely activated.” Fifth, the awareness that inner movements cause suffering enabled the participants to have a desire to be free from suffering and to thrive in compassionate living. The changes of awareness the participants experienced will encourage them to strive for freedom from suffering and will bring about their flourishing.

Encountering Others. The fifth through eighth sessions aimed to nurture compassion for others, including loved ones, a neutral person, and even a difficult person who has harmed us. All the participants struggled with recognizing the inner parts hidden within their inner movements during the third and fourth sessions, whereas they engaged well in restoring connections with others. When they nurtured compassion for others through the practice in which they stand in another’s shoes, they empathically understood the positions, attitudes, and sufferings of others, including loved ones, neutral persons, and even difficult persons. However,

what is interesting is that they were not aware of the sufferings of their inner parts caused by their relationships with difficult persons who had harmed them. In this respect, I will describe their responses, issues, and transformations in the processes of restoring connections with others.

The fifth and sixth sessions focused on nurturing compassion for loved ones who are suffering. All the participants easily connected with the practice of cultivating compassion for loved ones. Susan explained her experiences as follows: “I am familiar with praying for others. So I prayed for a loved one who is suffering where I work, and I practiced engaging in the story of the Bible as if I washed my loved one’s feet with a compassionate heart and mind.” Betty exercised the compassion practice for her husband as a loved one:

I engaged in the stories of the Bible with my imagination. So I could understand my husband’s position, attitude, and sufferings. I imagined that Jesus Christ was washing my feet and telling me, “Go to others to wash their feet.” I was amazed when I washed my husband’s feet in my imagination. I felt I was healed through the processes and the Holy Spirit flowed into my spirit, body, and mind.

In the spiritual awareness exercise of the sixth session, Linda became aware of the inner movements of her son: “I was aware of my son’s distressed and burdened heart. Also, I felt his responsibility for the management of his hospital and for his family. I prayed that he be free from suffering.” The other participants also became immersed in the practices with similar emotions.

In the encounter with neutral persons during the seventh session, participants tried to extend their compassion to a person they were not particularly interested in but whom they saw or had limited interaction with in a store or on the street. All the participants asserted that they had never exercised spiritual practices, such as prayer or meditation, to cultivate compassion for a neutral person before. They had two responses to the practice. The first one is that they did not reject the practice or did not struggle with this practice as much as other ones. The second is that they did not deeply engage in the practice. In other words, although they followed all the

directions of the seventh session, their responses were lackluster, flat, and uninspiring. Thus, in this session, they talked less about their insights, challenges, and awarenesses than in other sessions. Observing their responses, I found that they were not really interested in this practice, and they were not sensitive toward and curious about the neutral person. John queried, “How can I know the fears, needs, and suffering of a neutral person, like a market’s clerk?” Nancy explicated, “I could not deeply engage in the feelings, fears, and sufferings of the neutral person. No positive or negative feelings occurred within me.” Steven described his experience as follows: “I prayed for those whom I have met in the street. I repeated, ‘May the neutral person stay in Your presence; may the neutral person be free from suffering inflicted on them.’ However, I think my prayer was not passionate and in earnest.”

However, during the eighth session, Susan shared her new experiences with nurturing compassion for neutral persons:

A brother-in-law of my co-worker got into a car accident. He got hurt on the head and went to the ER. My co-worker asked me to pray that he would return to consciousness. The compassion practice for a neutral person I have learned helped me to pray for him, even though I am not related to him. I was sensitive to and curious about his fears, sufferings, and needs and earnestly prayed for him with a compassionate heart.

As Susan expresses, curiosity and sensitivity are vital for cultivating compassion for neutral persons.

For the eighth session’s encounter with difficult persons, all the participants sought to cultivate compassion for a person who was difficult for them to have compassion for. Although the eighth session was the one expressly focused on nurturing compassion for someone who had harmed them, they had struggled with this practice since the third session when they worked on gaining awareness of their inner movements and encountering their inner parts. The reason for their struggle was that they were suffering due to their relationships with harmful, difficult

persons. Betty suffered as a result of inner movements caused by her relationship with a church member who had harmed her. Linda and Nancy also experienced inner movements connected to relationships with others—a church member and a boss, respectively. Thus, it seems that cultivating compassion for difficult persons began in the third session.

There were many responses to the practice of encountering one's difficult person and showing him or her compassion. Five of the six participants had suffered or were suffering due to relationships with difficult persons. The uneasy relationships they had with these persons evoked inner movements within them. The inner movements caused them to suffer in their lives. Their struggles with their difficult persons even disturbed their connections with the divine or God. John and Betty described their experiences as follows: "I had to leave my prior church because of relationships with others, and it resulted in unbelief or disconnection from God." Thus, disconnection from others affected connection with both the Self and God.

The participants all responded to the suffering they experienced as a result of their relationships with difficult persons in their own ways. Steven believed his suffering would disappear as time went by. Linda and Nancy asserted that they could be free from suffering if they did not see the difficult person. Susan expressed her feelings by becoming angry or complaining to the difficult person. Betty shared that she prayed to God to heal the suffering caused by her difficult person, and the words of God helped her to endure her suffering.

However, the participants were aware that their personal ways of dealing with their difficult persons did not wholly free them from their sufferings. Steven admitted that he sometimes had negative emotions arise when he thought about his difficult person. When Linda and Nancy saw those who had harmed them, they experienced the pain again. Despite these experiences, some of the participants testified that their connection with God helped them to

become free from their suffering or that it gave them temporary relief. Susan described her experience as follows:

I felt hatred toward my co-worker who had hurt me. At first, I could not forgive the person. I did not even have any will to forgive that person. However, when I prayed to God, God told me that I should forgive the person. Following God's words to me, I prayed that I could forgive the person through the power of Holy Spirit. Surprisingly, I was then able to forgive that person without any conditions. I believe that God helped me to forgive the person when I could not do it by myself. This is the grace of God.

Betty and Nancy explained their different experiences. Betty shared:

When I prayed to God, God's words were impressed upon me. I felt that I was freed from my suffering by those words. However, as I returned to my daily life, I suffered in my relationship with my difficult person again. Over and over, I felt that I was relieved of my suffering and then experienced it again. I thought that I was not totally healed.

In terms of the actual practice for nurturing compassion for a difficult person, the participants struggled with the practice because they had diverse approaches and responses to their sufferings. Having asserted that God would heal her of the suffering caused by her relationship with a person at work, Susan explained that God listened to and responded to her request for relief:

When I prayed to God about my uneasy relationship with a person who had hurt me, God changed my environment so I would not have conflicts with the person. The person spontaneously moved to another department in my company. So I don't have any negative emotions caused by that person anymore.

Linda revealed the wants and fears of an inner part through her conversations during the practice, although she did not converse with the part:

There is a difficult person who has harmed me. Actually, the person doesn't know that they have hurt me. I was just hurt. I have been trying to restore my relationship with this person in many ways. However, our relationship stopped there. I was about to give up my efforts to restore my relationship with this person before this practice. By nature, I don't like having broken relationships with others. So, after nurturing compassion for others, I began to restore my relationship with this person again. I shared good things and gave a warm greeting to the person. But the person did not greet me. I think that it is the person's character. When I reflected on myself, I realized that I wanted appreciation, concern, and care from that person. So I felt I was much more hurt.

Just like Linda discovered she wanted appreciation and care from her husband through the compassion practices for encountering inner parts, she found she wanted concern and appreciation from her difficult person. This suggests that one of her inner parts wants appreciation and concern from others and is afraid of rejection and indifference from not only loved ones but also others. So I asked her to converse with her inner part in the presence of God during the last session.

Nancy considered the boss who had harmed her to be a spiritual teacher during the course's sessions.

I am thankful for my boss. I reflected on my inner movements and was concerned that I might give someone wounds. I am even thinking that being with my boss might be God's will. In other words, the boss might be my spiritual teacher. Through my relationship with this person, I am able to meet my inner parts, and I am trying to restore my relationship with another. As I reflected that God would train me and make me grow through this boss, I begin to have a compassionate and thankful heart. Although I was suffering in my relationship with the boss, I believe that God sent this person to me to nurture compassion.

As Betty exercised the practice for nurturing compassion for a difficult person, she described that she felt guilt. In addition, she was struggling with the practice and her situation.

While I exercised the practice for nurturing compassion for a difficult person, it was hard for me that I wasn't following the words of God. I felt that Jesus asked me, 'I died for you on the cross. Why are you suffering because of this relationship? Why don't you forgive the person?' It was hard for me that I wasn't following these words. I felt guilty about why I am such a person. I prayed that I could forgive the person.

At a session the week following the eighth session, the participants explained their changes of awareness through their spiritual journals. They were trying to restore their connections with difficult persons or others.

Nancy continued to work on her relationship with her boss. She had exercised the practice of "taking their Pulse," putting herself in the place of her boss.

I felt pity for the boss. At first, I felt pity for her because of her illness. However, as I practiced taking the boss's Pulse, I experienced a compassionate heart for her being herself. When I reflected on the boss's life, knowing her mother had been divorced three times, I felt her suffering. I remembered her miserable memory she shared with me when I walked with her on the same path. She did not have any money and walked two miles to her house. While she walked with her mother, a man chased her and her mother. So they ran away in a hurry. When I reflected on her story, I understood her environments and situations and had a compassionate heart to pray for her. I wished that she would be free from suffering.

After Nancy exercised taking her boss's Pulse, she was able to forgive her boss and interact with her without any hatred or anger.

Likewise, Linda explained that after she took the Pulse of her difficult person, she understood the person's context and position with a compassionate heart. She explained that the difficult person wanted her concern and care. After Steven and Betty exercised taking the other's Pulse, they explained that they understood the fears, needs, and wants of their difficult persons better. Steven said, "How difficult has his life been? I felt his sufferings." Betty shared, "I felt peaceful and at ease although I encountered the person through the practice. I admitted that I was different from her. I felt that the person needs attention, concern, and love from others." Susan explained her experiences as follows:

The practice of taking the Pulse of the difficult person is for myself. While I had a sense of hatred, I suffered. The prayer and practice for the difficult person enabled me to be free from my sufferings. This practice is for myself.

Lastly, the participants testified that their compassionate capacities were expanded to others. Linda explained her compassionate actions in her life as follows:

I began to be interested in lonely and isolated persons in the church. I wanted to go near them and to become intimate with them. I became transformed in that I was able to maintain eye contact with them and hug them. I am so happy.

Nancy and Betty also experienced changes of awareness. Nancy expounded, "Through the compassion practices, I gained a compassionate heart toward church members. I became familiar

with those who worship and sit alone in the church. Such persons come up in my mind and heart.”

Susan described her special experiences with praying for others:

While I slept, I was suddenly awakened around midnight. I had a compassionate heart to pray for someone. I began to pray for him at dawn. What I later discovered was that the person got in a serious car accident at the time at which I prayed for him. When I talked with him about my experience, he explained that he was saved because of my prayer. After having such an experience, I feel that I should pray for others.

Steven was aware that the compassion practice is an authentic spiritual way to help all sentient beings become free from suffering and to thrive.

I believe that the compassion practice is a spiritual way to heal our broken world. It invited me to understand my wife, children, family, even my neighborhood with a compassionate heart, standing in the place of other persons. I hope that compassion flows into the world.

Reflection and Evaluation. As I described and analyzed the responses, descriptions, and struggles of the participants, I realized that I should reflect on some of the participants’ experiences in particular.

First, the participants struggled a lot with the practice of breathing in and out because of their unfamiliarity with the practice and because they misunderstood it as emerging from other religions. Thus, the practice of breathing in and out needs to be accommodated to Korean and Christian ways of thinking and acting.

Second, the participants engaged in the practices for encountering the divine and connecting with others. However, they did not become aware that their inner movements are cries of their inner parts. Therefore, they did not engage in conversing with their inner parts in order to nurture compassion for themselves. It feels selfish and therefore sinful to focus on themselves and self-care. Some theological reframing is necessary for self-compassion as well.

Moreover, they need many more exercises that will engage them in self-compassion for healing their wounded inner parts and connecting them with the Self.

Third, the participants nurtured compassion for others, including loved ones, neutral persons, and even difficult persons, through the practice that asked them to stand in the place of another person. However, they did not recognize that their inner parts had been hurt in their relationships with difficult persons. Thus, they were not aware that their inner parts needed healing. The way to address this would be to focus more on changing their levels of awareness through helping them to understand better what it means to observe and interact with inner parts.

Fourth, since the participants were not aware that their inner movements are cries of their inner parts, they also did not recognize that difficult persons' behaviors and words, which had harmed them, emerged from the cries of inner parts within the difficult persons. In other words, difficult persons also suffer from inner movements, and their inner movements are the voices of their inner parts. Therefore, in order to more fully nurture compassion for others, the participants needed to be guided into a greater awareness of the sufferings of their difficult persons and assisted in recognizing their inner movements as the cries of their inner parts.

Conclusion

A Journey toward Compassionate Living in a Broken World

People are suffering in their personal and communal lives. Some do not even recognize the fact that they are suffering, and some are not aware of the causes of the suffering they are experiencing. Others do not know how to free themselves from their sufferings and flourish in their lives. Most people suffer more as they choose unhelpful ways to respond to their sufferings. The participants in this study from my Korean congregation had the same awareness and attitudes toward suffering before they participated in my curriculum for nurturing compassion.

From a broad perspective, compassion enables people to become free from suffering and to flourish in their lives. It also helps people to recognize their suffering and the causes of that suffering. Moreover, it cultivates the skills, heart, will, motivation, mind, and behaviors to alleviate their suffering. In this respect, my participants engaged in nurturing compassion through various changes of awareness, attitude, approach, and behavior. Through making these changes and nurturing compassion, they were able to become free from their sufferings and achieve their flourishing.

Supporting my premise that human beings are suffering due to disconnection from the sacred, including the divine, the Self, and others, the participants in this study also experienced suffering caused by disconnection from the divine, the Self, and others. This conclusion is based on the descriptions and responses they gave during the sessions of the compassion practice curriculum.

Based on this premise, I asserted that compassion is a spiritual way to restore connection with the sacred, including the divine, the Self, and others. Restoring connection with the sacred enables people to become free from suffering and to experience their ultimate growth and well-

being. Thus, a group of people from my congregation participated in an eight-week curriculum to nurture compassion for restoring connection with the sacred. Although they struggled with some aspects of compassion formation, they cultivated compassion to restore their relationships with the sacred in their lives. They have started out on a journey toward compassionate living in our broken world. One of the six participants expressed her hope during the final session of the curriculum that compassion would flow from her into people's families, churches, local communities, and the world. Referencing Isaiah 11:6-8, she explained that compassionate living will come to us when we cultivate compassion and compassion flows into and over the world:

The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. The infant will play near the hole of the cobra, and the young child put his hand into the viper's nest. (Isaiah 11:6-8, NIV)

Compassion restores connection with the sacred, including the divine, the Self, and others.

Moreover, compassion brings about peace, restoration, justice, healing, reconciliation, and hope in our world.

In terms of future research, I will make some suggestions for cultivating compassionate living. First of all, I have explored the meanings, issues, and practices of compassion through studying three areas—Buddhism, secular fields, and Christian perspectives—thus employing an interdisciplinary method. Fortunately, compassion has recently been studied in various disciplines and the traditions of other religions that I have not explored. Therefore, I would like to broaden my horizons and explore various frameworks of compassion through real interactions of interdisciplinary methods. Various studies of compassion will expand the spectrum of compassion and provide different paths according to the varying personalities and inclinations of many people.

Second, in my dissertation, I have explored Ignatian prayer and contemplation, which has perspectives and characteristics that nurture and cultivate compassion, as a Christian perspective from a Christian tradition. As I have studied compassion practices, I have realized that there are many elements, approaches, and practices for cultivating compassion in Christian traditions. Thus, I would like to study various forms of prayer, contemplation, or other practices in the Christian traditions I have not explored in this project. This will provide many resources and more theological grounds for cultivating compassionate living from a Christian perspective and within a Christian context.

Third, I carried out the eight-week curriculum for nurturing compassion with six members of my congregation. My qualitative method was the case study approach, which meant gaining an in-depth understanding of descriptions, responses, struggles, and transformations of the participants in relation to the curriculum. My study is limited because it only involved six immigrant members of my Korean congregation living in the U.S. Also, their ages ranged from the mid-fifties to the early sixties. Thus, for future research, I would like to carry out the eight-week course of compassion in diverse contexts or with people in different age groups and to study and analyze diverse participants' descriptions, narratives, and responses. The results of such research would be a valuable resource for developing compassion practices and nurturing different paths of compassion.

Finally, in relation to my third suggestion for future research, I have explored the meanings, issues, and practices of compassion and created a curriculum for nurturing compassion. Then I have applied the compassion practices with a group of adults from my congregation (within my own context) and described their responses, narratives, and transformations related to the curriculum. In other words, the schematic structure of my

dissertation is theory, practice within my context, and then reflection. In future research, I would like to explore diverse people's encounters with the current practice, which is the eight-week curriculum for compassion formation, and take into consideration the impact of their differing contexts on their experiences with the curriculum. I would like to analyze the phenomena emerging from the encounter between practice and context from a cultural and contextual perspective and reflect on the phenomena through various theological lenses. Finally, I would like to reframe and revise the compassion practices in the current curriculum according to each context.¹

¹ John Swinton and Harriet Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research* (London: SCM Press, 2006), 93–98.

Appendix A

Informed Consent to Participate in the Compassion Practices for SungJin's Research

Primary Researcher: Sung-Jin Yang, Ph.D. Student at Claremont School of Theology
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Please read this consent document carefully before you decide to participate in this study. You are free to ask questions at any time before, during, or after your participation in this research.

Title of Research Plan

Compassion Practices

Introduction

I am Sung-jin Yang, a Ph.D student in Practical Theology, with a concentration in Education and Formation at Claremont School of Theology. I will create and carry out an eight-week course of compassion practices with you. The course and research will include a description and analysis of your interactions and narratives that will be part of the compassion practices courses. You can contact with me at 949 943 4507 if you have any questions at any time before, during, or after your participation.

Purpose of Research Plan

This research plan aims to understand how you react to the compassion practices course to nurture compassion. My specific concern for this research will be the following: throughout the compassion practices, I will learn 1) how you are grounded in an encounter with the sacred in your lives, 2) how you interact interiorly with your parts and authentic Self, and 3) how you interact with your loved ones, neutral persons, and even enemies.

Procedures

If you consent, I will carry out an eight-week course of compassion practices with you. Compassion practices will be a way to restore connection with the sacred, including God, true Self, and others. The compassion practices of 1st week through 2nd weeks focus on exercises of being grounded in the compassionate God and divine union, love, fellowship, and awareness of the compassionate God. The compassion practices from 3rd to 4th weeks concentrate on practices to be aware of inner movement and nurture the compassionate Self in the grounding oneself in the compassionate God. The compassion practices of 5th through 8th week aims to nurture compassion for others, including loved ones, neutral relationships, and even one's enemies.

In the procedures of compassion practices for 8 weeks, I would like you to tell or write in detail your experiences as you interact during the compassion practices. The data collected will be your narratives in the form of spiritual journals, pictures, symbolic art, and recorded conversations. All data will be saved under your permission and will be protected with password so that no one can have access.

Conversation in the practices will be recorded in an audio format, using my phone's voice recorder. Spiritual journals which you would write will be digitally typed. Pictures and symbolic arts will be pictured in my phone. You would have free choice to share your journals, pictures, and symbolic arts with others regarding the topics. However, unless you want to share, all things will be stopped.

Moreover, I will share my understanding and analysis in relation with your narratives and conversations with you. If I may misunderstand your narratives and conversations, I will correct my understanding and analysis according to your comments

Time Required

Participants will be involved for 1 hour a week for eight weeks.

Potential Risks of Research

There are no known risks related with this research. However, there may be potential risks about your feelings. If you feel discomfort or shame during compassion practices course, please feel free to speak to me promptly. If you become immersed in severe emotional stress, I will provide you with appropriate ways to free and detach such feelings in the process of compassion practices. If you do not become free from such feelings, I will provide you with a list of licensed spiritual directors and therapists you may consult.

Benefits

Although there are no guaranteed benefits, you may benefit from participating in compassion practices that enable you to nurture compassion for compassionate living. Also, you may experience a deeper connection with the sacred, including God, the Self, and others. Furthermore, your interactions and narratives related to the practice of compassion will be a valuable resource for further future study to make this a more compassionate world.

Confidentiality/Anonymity,

Your name in all writings will be kept confidential to the extent provided by law. No one will be able to see your narratives or even know whether you participated in this research. After the research has been completed and analyzed, all files with password protection will be destroyed. If you want anonymity, your identity will be protected by use of a pseudonym. Also, confidentiality will be preserved. No one will recognize who participates in compassion practices. If you want to choose a pseudonym, please write it here: _____

Voluntary Participation:

Your participation in this research is voluntary. You have the freedom to terminate your involvement in the compassion practices at any time without penalty. Also, if you want to refuse any questions at any time, you are free not to answer those questions during the course.

Statement of Your Consent

If you are satisfied with your understanding of the information in this document and agree to participate in this research project, please sign and date both copies of this form.

Participant's Name (Print)

Researcher's Name (Print)

Participant's Signature

Researcher's Signature

Date

Date

Appendix B

1. Questions in the first section of compassion practices

- 1) 나이 Age:
- 2) What are your roles and leadership in church? (교회에서의 직분은 무엇입니까?)
- 3) How long have you been in this church? (언제부터 이 교회에 참석하였나요?)
- 4) How long have you been a Christian? (언제부터 기독교인이 되었나요?)
- 5) What spiritual practices have you mainly exercised for your faith? (여러분의 신앙생활을 위해 주로 어떤 영성 훈련을 하였습니까?)
- 6) What have been your goals in the spiritual practices? (여러분들의 영성훈련의 목적은 무엇이었습니까?)
- 7) Where have a your sacred place been for your spiritual practices? (여러분들의 영성훈련을 위해서 신성한 장소는 어디였습니까?)
- 8) Have you exercised spiritual practices for yourself and others? (여러분들은 여러분 자신을 위해서 그리고 다른 사람들을 위해서 영성훈련을 하신 경험이 있으십니까?)

2. Common and main questions in the compassion practices

- 1) What have you experienced in each of the compassion practices to restore connections with the sacred, including God, true Self, and others? (여러분들은 신성한 것, 즉 하나님, 진정한 자아, 그리고 다른 사람들과의 연합을 회복시켜주는 각각의 영성 훈련 안에서 무엇을 경험하였습니까?)
- 2) What difficulties and questions have you had in compassion practices? (영성훈련을 하면서 어떠한 어려움들과 질문들이 있었습니까?)
- 3) Has each of the compassion practices affected and changed your ideas and lives? (각각의 영성훈련이 여러분의 생각과 삶에 어떠한 변화를 주었습니까?)
- 4) What were your special experiences or difficulties or questions while you have exercised each practice in your sacred place during a week? (한 주간 동안 영성 훈련을 하면서 여러분의 신성한 장소에서 특별한 경험들, 어려움들, 어떠한 질문들이 있으셨습니까?)
- 5) Could you tell me whether your spiritual journal and the other activities have helped your compassion practices? If they were helpful, which parts were very helpful for you? (영성일기 또는 다른 활동들이 여러분의 영성 훈련을 하는 데에 도움을 주었습니까? 도움이 되었다면 어떤 부분이 도움이 되었습니까?)

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